



THE APPALACHIA ISSUE

FREE
VOLUME 13 NUMBER 11





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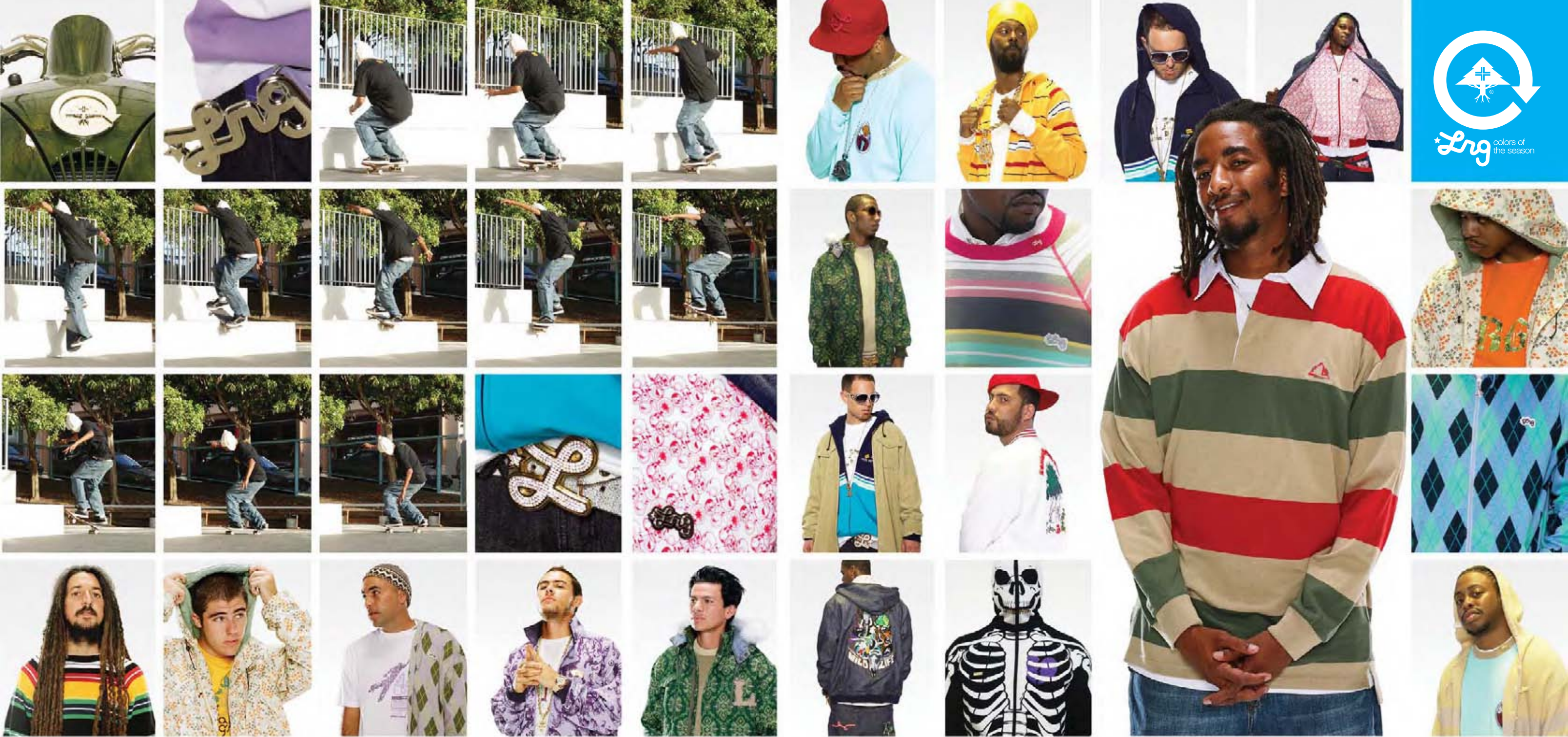


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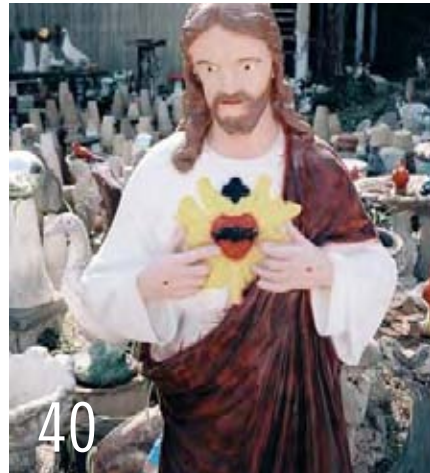
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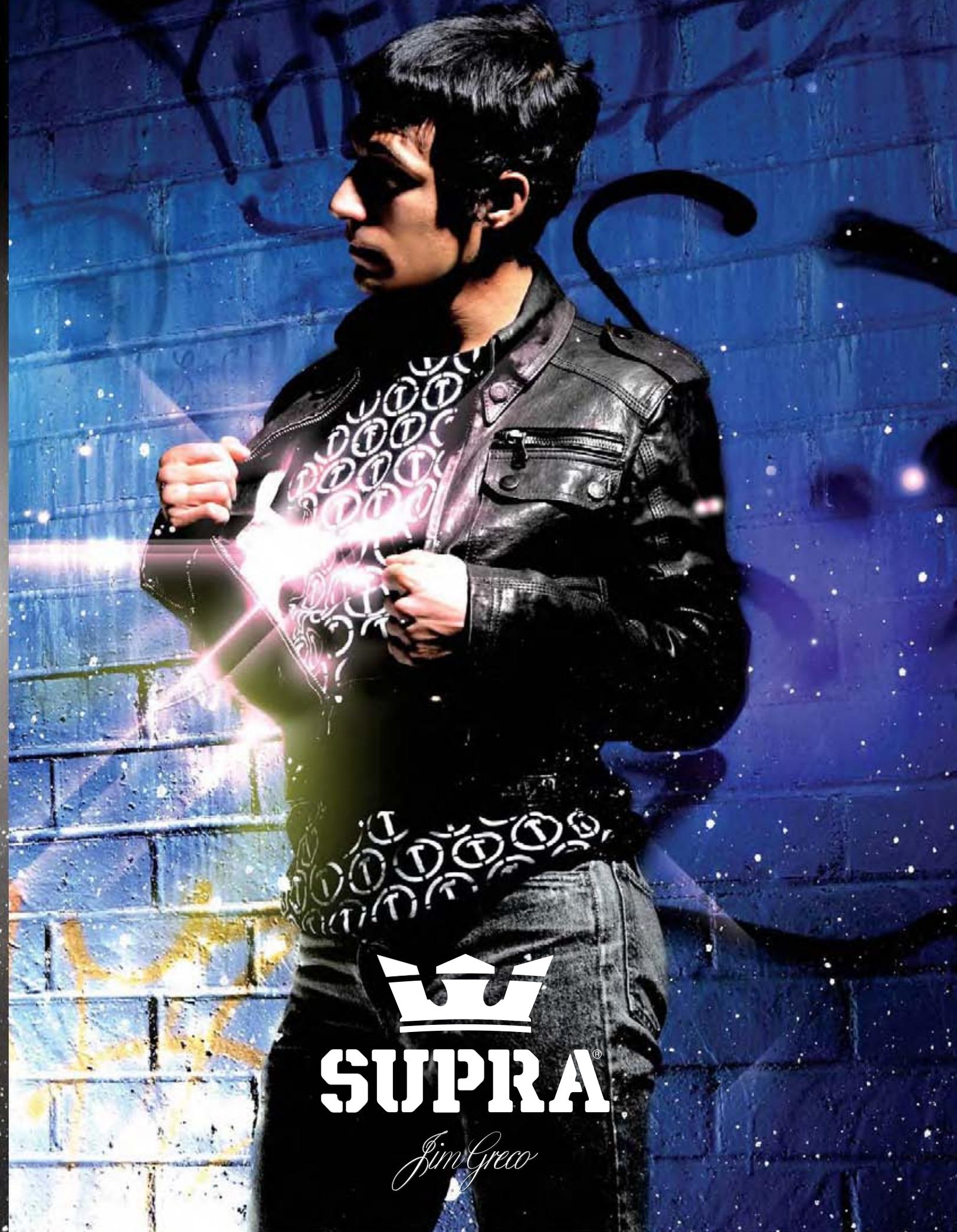
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WHO GOES THERE?



Vice editor Jesse Pearson did all the interviews for this issue, which means he had to do all the talking while the photographers cheerfully snapped away, blissfully unaware of how much of a phony he felt like playing Mr. Nice Guy with every single person he met, just in case they had a good story.



Vice photo editor Patrick O'Dell took a shitload of photos down in Appalachia. Patrick says, "We stayed at a Catholic priest's compound, in a guesthouse in the back next to the river. There were lots of hornets, a cricket in the bathroom that wouldn't stop cricketing, and huge spiders in the shower that I couldn't kill for bad-luck reasons."

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WHO GOES THERE?



Skater and photographer Jerry Hsu came along just for the what-the-fuck-ness of it. The best Jerry moment came when we entered Homer the mountain man's trailer and he said, in total shock and surprise, "What the... what?" Swear to God, he was a pube away from saying, "What is that?" He actually then did say, "Is that a Japanese or a Chinese?" Gales of laughter followed.



We also brought in ringer photo genius Roe Ethridge to shoot the cover and a few other tinkling gems you'll find sprinkled throughout the issue. He arrived just in time for our final, insane night at the local bar.

Roe read a Slavoj Zizek book on the plane, btw. We just outed him.



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LBJ at the Fletchers' cabin in Inez, Kentucky, in 1964. Photo: Corbis

In his State of the Union address in January 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a “war on poverty.” In part, he said, “[We] must pursue poverty... wherever it exists—in city slums and small towns, in sharecropper shacks or in migrant-worker camps, on Indian reservations, among whites as well as Negroes, among the young as well as the aged, in the boomtowns and in the depressed areas. Our aim is not only to relieve the symptom of poverty but to cure it and, above all, to prevent it... We will launch a special effort in the chronically distressed areas of Appalachia.”

Three months later, in April of 1964, he stood on the porch of Tom Fletcher, a coal miner from Inez, Kentucky, and continued to rail against the poverty that for decades had been whittling the Appalachian people down to kindling sticks.

42 years later, not a whole fucking lot has changed. Seventy percent of local kids are on school lunch programs. An inordinate amount of the workforce is unemployed, and small businesses routinely expire from crib death. Disabled coal miners can’t get benefits. Up in the hollers, families have been surviving on welfare for four generations. And in 2000, Inez was the site of what the EPA calls the worst environmental disaster in the history of the eastern United States, when 350 million gallons of rancid coal slurry flooded the local rivers.

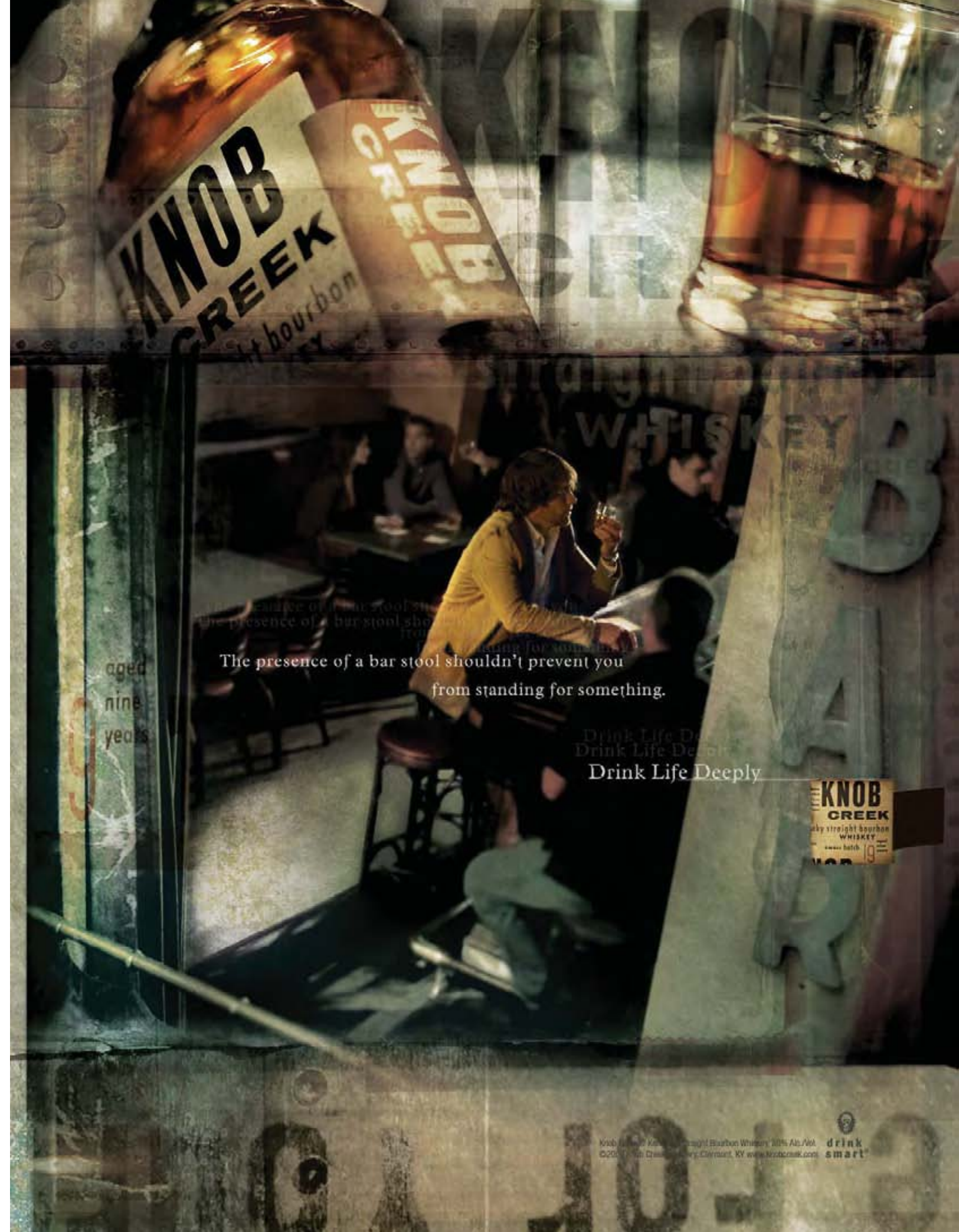
The prescription-painkiller industry, however, is flourishing.

And hey, how about a final, symbolic nail in the coffin of LBJ’s abortion of an attempt to help Appalachia? The unemployed coal miner whose porch Johnson stood on all those years ago was charged in 1992 with murder in the poisoning of his three-year-old daughter.

You can’t make this stuff up, right?

So we went to Appalachia to interview poor people and coal miners. This was going to be called the Poor Issue, then it was called the Coal Issue for a second. Neither one of those worked though, because we met too wide a range of Appalachians down there. It was more like “Who Are the People in Your Neighborhood” than *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Did we meet mountain men that fulfilled every preconceived notion a New Yorker might have about them? Sure. We also met activists, earnest Catholic priests, a bunch of raging partiers, and the male, Kentuckian version of *Grey Gardens*. The lesson that we humbly learned is that no one place can be just one thing.

But we did get to drink moonshine, see lots of tits, fondle handguns, eat fried chicken for almost every meal, and imbibe sweet tea so pungent that it makes you feel sick on your first sip.



WELCOME TO INEZ, KENTUCKY



Photo by Jerry Hsu

Inez is in the heart of Eastern Kentucky, so it's pretty amazing looking. It's all rolling hills and deep hollers (that's "hollows" to you Northerners).

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WELCOME TO INEZ, KENTUCKY



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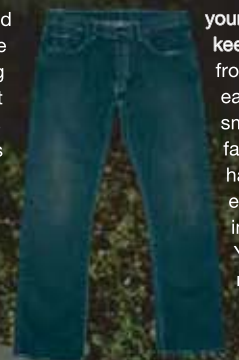
Even with its grab bag of problems (drug addiction, abject poverty, ecological Armageddon), most of Inez is, on the surface, a bucolic little Eden. In fact, Eden was the town's original name.



photo: Jens Anderson

Lucky Mouth and Weactivist Chris Pastras jumping the Sunset gap.

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your agility and style while keeping froth and cold from getting inside. The easy access of the extra smart pockets make them fabulous places to keep hay and the buttoned fly eliminates the old "hay in the zipper problem". Yes, *Lower* is the name, now get back in that saddle!

Interested in learning more about Streethorsing? Go to your local WeSC dealer and buy the book *'Horseplay - A Streethorsing Retrospective'*. Also check www.wesc.com for interesting info.



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THE FOOD OF THE GODS

The best fried chicken and mashed potatoes we have ever had are at Moonie's Golden Fried Chicken in Inez, Kentucky. Just sinking your teeth into this pure Southern goodness makes you almost wish the Confederates had won. Curse their foolish pride!



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FOOL'S GOLD

We won't say in whose house we found this mysterious sex tape, but we laughed and oohed-and-ahhed about it for a couple of seconds before throwing it into the VCR. Um, it wasn't porn. It was some weird kids' version of *Gunga Din* or something. Truly disturbing.



JESUS THE NAVIGATOR

Outdated religious arcana like this is all over Appalachia. Is it that faith is helping the poor get through their daily struggles against adversity and hunger or is it that religion in America is the world's first fully functional perpetual-motion machine?

NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK

This was the only black guy we saw the whole time we were down there and he wasn't fucking around. That's an airbrushed portrait of Left Eye, Aaliyah, and Tupac on the hood of the candy-apple-red Caddy he had parked outside the motel room he was living in, which—when we glanced inside—had boxes of Nikes stacked waist-high.



TOWN MASCOT

There's something really perverse about southeastern Kentuckians taking the classic lawn jockey format and turning it into a cute little coal miner with a smudged face and a loose belt. There are levels of unintended cultural commentary here that we have just barely begun to unravel.



PROUD LION

This guy here was in a massive stack of drawings at the local illegal tattoo parlor. Could you imagine having him splayed permanently across your back?

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FATHER BEITING'S HOUSE



Father Ralph W. Beiting put the *Vice* staff up in his guesthouse while we were in Kentucky. He's been trying to rescue Appalachia from poverty for 50 years now. He should change his name to Monsignor Sisypus.



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FATHER BEITING'S HOUSE



Photo by Jerry Hsu

The Stations of the Cross were in his backyard next to a campfire.



Photo by Jerry Hsu

Father Beiting has a veritable compound of volunteer workers who care so much about the place they're from and the people who live there that it's pretty much heartbreakingly touching. They are like missionaries, only they don't have to fly to Africa.

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FATHER BEITING'S HOUSE



Photo by Jerry Hsu

There aren't many Catholics in Kentucky, so spotting a Sacred Heart statue at a lawn-ornament store was a real revelation.



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MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS

My Odyssey in Appalachia

PHOTOS BY PATRICK O'DELL



The first part of the house out here was made in the 30s. There was two families raised in that house. I had 11 brothers and sisters. I'm the seventh son. I had four sisters and they're all gone but one. My bedroom was in the back part of the house. That part was on there when I was born, about 45 years ago. That's all I can say about the house.

I moved out into this little trailer, taking turns with my sister. I took it nights and she took it days. The house was falling in. I would sleep in the main house in the day and she would use it to cook in. Cooked on a little coal heater. I hate to say this now, I ain't talking about nobody, but it was a potbelly stove. She'd cook beans and taters and bread. She'd bake bread down in the ash pan. She wasn't all there. One of her kids died at three years old and that messed her up. At night I'd get in the trailer and cover up best I could. There was no heat.

Mom was bad off. She got broke up and fell down through the family. A truck broke her up. It broke her right leg, I think. Or her left leg. I took care of my brother too. He got beat up real bad. He stayed in bed ten years and got passed on down the line.

I get a check to take care of myself. I was in a wreck here. I got broke up. Broke my arm and four ribs. A coal truck run over me. It throwed me under a guardrail and into a telephone pole. I brought a lawsuit but I lost it.

Nowadays I'm just up here and sometimes I help out my neighbors. I cut the weeds and clean up the yard. If I put in a day's work, I'm

stretched out for three or four days. I watch some videos too. I ain't got no antenna.

I used to be the devil. They judged me and said I was the devil. They didn't like me. They said they seen the devil in me. I used to be pretty mean. There was an accident with my brother. I don't want to talk about that. It was 30 years ago and I'm trying to forget. We just used our fists and nothing else but he'd take a shotgun, throw it up in your face and stuff. He was bit by a dog and he went mad. The dog went mad and he went mad. When he went mad, you couldn't say anything to him. We'd try to restrain him and stuff. But we couldn't. [Homer shot his brother to death in self-defense—Ed.]

I put in my time for it. Eight months in the county jail. I had to plea-bargain. They were trying to give me the electric chair. I got two lawyers. One wasn't worth a hoot. Then I got a colored man. I'm relation to coloreds—I ain't race-bigoted.

You can't sleep in the county jail. They try to burn your toes off. They light toilet paper in between your toes, and they'll hang you at night in your cell. But they don't want to get me mean. My uncle, they run him out of the state. He shot a man in the face. Bloodhounds run him home but he wasn't there. I ain't that mean, but they don't want to stir me up. I try to be peaceful and make peace with the Lord. They told lies on me.

I used to drink homemade wine. I drank a little beer but now I don't touch it. If I drank moonshine I wouldn't be here very long.
HOMER THOMPSON

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HOMER'S HOMES



Photo by Jerry Hsu

This is the shack that Homer and his 11 brothers and sisters were born into.



Photo by Jerry Hsu

This is Homer's brand-new trailer and current home. He locks the door if he steps out into the yard for even a minute.



Photo by Jerry Hsu

Homer and his sister used to take turns sleeping in this old trailer. Homer had the night shift.



Photo by Jerry Hsu

This patchwork metal shack on Homer's land just kind of sits there and rusts.



PHOTO: GIOVANNI REDA

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FAMILY PLOT

Homer Buries His Kin

PHOTOS BY PATRICK O'DELL



I'm the oldest caretaker of this graveyard. It isn't that big. The first person got put in here a long time ago. Luther Thompson. He's a great-great-uncle of my family. My step-pap was his brother. That's the second grave yonder next to Luther. That was his brother.

Here's my daddy's grave. My mom's next to him too. My dad ain't been dead ten years yet. I think he took a heart attack. He died twice. He was on a respirator. I was close to him but not to her. My dad was friendly, a good and decent person. He used to work for the railroad and the mines and everything. My mom lost a lot of blood when she passed on. My dad was brokenhearted after my mom died. They was close. He'd been married over 50-some years. They had

their little disagreements.

I never been married. I'm fixing to, maybe. I'm going with a woman. She lives way up in Virginia. She comes out here. I'm not really for sure how I met her—it was in the storehouse or the church. Been six years now.

First grave I ever came to up here was right yonder. We dug them ourselves. You dig four and a half feet down, then you measure up 18 inches from the bottom. Then you come in and dig about three inches into the sides all around 18 inches up. Then you lay boards down in there. The boards go in over the box. Then the dirt goes on there. I've cut many a one.

HOMER THOMPSON



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HOMER'S FAMILY PLOT



Photo by Jerry Hsu

Homer Thompson's family graveyard is up at the end of the holler he grew up in.



Photo by Jerry Hsu

People are still getting buried up there today.

A FILM BY **LARRY CLARK**
DIRECTOR OF **KIDS AND BULLY**

Wassup ROCKERS

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Photo by Jerry Hsu

TEN YEARS' BAD LUCK

Things Turn Around

I lived in Columbus most of my life, though I was born down here in Kentucky. I moved back up here four years ago to help my dad. He lives next door. He's getting a little older—you know how that gets. He's not doing real good. When I got here, I wanted to get a home with my mom but that fell through. Kind of left me out in the cold a little bit.

I finally got me a trailer. It burnt down on me last year and I lost everything. A bad heater started the fire. I had me a big old



Photo by Patrick O'Dell

porch there and everything. It burnt completely to the ground. I was away at work. I came back home about 10 o'clock and it was all in flames. It was on the worst day. There was ice so the fire trucks couldn't even get in. These trailers go up real quick. They're made of thin, thin wood—it's two-by-twos instead of two-by-fours—and no drywall. That porch out back there, I'd worked on it for three years. I was proud of that. It was big—a monster! It had seats built in and everything. But I lost it all.





Photo by Patrick O'Dell

So I went back to Columbus again, and I suffered. I didn't have no home or nothing. There wasn't hardly no work either. I was staying with my mom or my kids there.

We ran across this trailer here for \$1,500. We all got together and the family helped us with the money. We got back down here and there was nothing here. The floors were falling in and all. But I knew I could try to get it good.

I can't hardly work no more. All my life I hung drywall. All my life, that's all I did. You carry the drywall on your head and it smashes your neck down. I don't get benefits, but I'm working on it. I got to go see a bone specialist or something. It's a long process, but I got a paper saying it's a disease and my neck's deteriorating and all that.

We get our electricity from next door. We run a power cord over from my dad's trailer. We just need to go easy on it. We use a couple lights and the TV. We just got our water working now, but for a long time we had to

The last ten years of my life were the worst, but the last year of my life has been the best. I'm coming back from what I lost.

run a hose from the yard up through the kitchen window. For four years, I never had a stove. Just now, we got our new stove. Before that we were using electric skillet. Now I got

my first stove and my first propane tank in my life. It's our first heat ever in this house! Everything's coming together.

The last ten years of my life were the worst, but the last year of my life has been the best.

I'm coming back from what I lost. This is a small community here, but there's not enough work for everybody. The coal industry is a big job, and one of the major jobs out here is being a coal driver. But it's hard. It's a poverty community. But you know, it's beautiful out here. Peace, quiet, the mountains... I been fighting for years just to stay here.

I got things to work on, but overall I'm a super-good person. I don't steal, I don't cuss, I don't lie. I try to help other people. I mow my dad's grass even though it hurts my neck.
ROGER MAYNARD

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LOAD SIXTEEN TONS AND WHAT DO YOU GET?

A Broken Back and Black Lungs

I had 22 years in the coal mines, all underground. I started down there when I was about 22. I thought it was the greatest thing in the world when I was young. In fact, up until the time I was injured I'd been planning on working in the coal mines until I was at least 55.

The first two years in there, I worked the day shift. That goes from 6:30 in the morning till 3:30 in the afternoon. Then, after two years, I went to the second shift. That goes from 2:30 until 11:30 at night. I stayed on that for the rest of my time in the mines. For 19 years I was a continuous miner. That's the first guy that goes in, cuts the coal up, and extracts it. I worked at the same mines the whole time I was in there.

We never went union until '93, but I believe that every coal miner in the United States ought to be union. I worked with people who are in their mid-40s now, who had in over 20 years when the mine shut down. They'd never worked anywhere else and now their pensions are gone because of the company going bankrupt. If they get anything at all, it might be like \$12 or \$17 dollars a month. See, the same mine changes hands many times. The mine I worked at was owned by Massey, Shell Oil, Ziegler, and Horizon during my time there. When Horizon went bankrupt, all the guys who had been paying into the pension fund there lost it. I got to go back to my union pension, which was better for me anyway. The companies in this country absolutely don't care about their workers. It's not only

the coal industry. It's nationwide. Everyone's getting away from unionization, shipping jobs away to Mexico and everything. All you're working for is what you get paid that week.

February 15, 1994 was the last day I worked in the coal mines. I got my back broke. I also had five ribs broke and my sternum cracked. The roof came in and I was under a rock that they estimated weighed more than a ton. Luckily, I was between the tracks. You know they got railroad tracks down there to haul things in and out? Had I

**The company denied
that I ever even
worked for them. Just
like I didn't exist.**

not been down between the rails, I would have been killed. I would have been totally crushed. That rock was something like eight feet long, four feet wide, and seven or eight inches thick. I went unconscious when it hit me, but I came to before they got it off. I remember my face was mashed up between the tracks and I was struggling trying to breathe. I was panicking. I knowed I was a goner because I could hear them talking and if they didn't get it off of my chest, I was getting the last breath of air I was ever gonna get. We was on a "weekend warrior" shift. If

you worked 32 hours on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, you got 40 hours pay. So on Friday, we had a lot of extra men on a double crew. There were 13 of us running coal that day. We were on the way to the section we were working, and there was some rock and stuff that fell on the track. The boss got off and was gonna get that loose rock off the track. He checked the top and started getting the rock out of the way. I saw that he'd sounded the top, done everything he was supposed to do to make sure it was safe, so I got down off the train to help him.

They took me straight to Appalachian Regional Hospital, but then they transferred me to another hospital's trauma unit. Today, I still have trouble related to those injuries. I have to go to the doctor every month for my back. I have to take pain medication, muscle relaxers, and arthritis medicine.

Right now, my respiratory problems are worse than my back injuries. I have constant shortness of breath. I can't walk or exert myself without getting out of breath. I believe that it's black lung, and all I really want is a fair shake. There are some doctors out there that the company always sends you to for exams. First you go to the Department of Labor and sign up to go to a doctor of your choice. If that doctor says there's anything wrong with you, the company has 30 days to appeal the diagnosis. Then they send you to one of these doctors that don't even believe that black lung exists. There are peo-

Continued on pg. 128

Photo by Roe Ethridge



AFTER THE MINES

Motorcycles Are My Retirement Plan

I started working in the mines in about '69 or '70, when I was 17 years old. I just worked part-time during the summer. In '73, I hired on full-time. I worked 22 years there. I started out underground, then I moved to the outside for 18 years. I was a preparation foreman. That's the guy who gets the coal ready to go into the railroad train. You get the rock out of it and wash it.

I've had two knee operations, a back operation, and open-heart surgery. I've had four bypasses. The knee and the back stuff was from all the lifting. They tell me I got black lung, but I don't get anything out of it. I guess I'm still too young and breathing too good. They wait till you're dead and then you can't pursue it. I attribute my heart condition to my respiratory trouble—not enough oxygen in the blood. I had pneumonia in my left lung this last summer. First time I've had it, but my lungs are just getting weaker all the time.

I thought I was having another heart attack when that pneumonia kicked in. It was right over my left lung. I got down to the hospital and they found out it was walking pneumonia. But all the ailments go together. What it amounts to is this: We gave our health up for a lump of coal.

You can't get shit off them. I been trying to fight for compensation, but you can't get a thing off the mines. You can get disability, Social Security, but nothing from the mines.

My dad worked 37 years in the mines, but he worked 23 years at a union mine. The last

part of his life he worked at the same mine that I did. He's crippled from the chest down now and he's getting nothing from the non-union place where we worked together. The union mine, though, is helping him out with insurance. They're taking care of him good. The mines will just walk off and leave you so you ain't got nothing. We were always non-union up here in Martin County. A lot of mines, when the workers would start to talk about going union, they would say, "Well,

I charge about \$15 or a case of beer. Either one. It's a good little hobby.

we'll give you a dollar more an hour." Most of the men would go for it. There's so much money at first. People would just start buying things up right away, getting trailers, Harleys, new cars... But I got to say, back in the 70s and early 80s the mine did take care of us. When I first started there, I didn't have shit. I went to them and said, "I need \$3,000 to buy me a brand-new car." The mine owner said, "You go get that car, son." I said, "How am I gonna get it?" He said, "You go on down to the bank and tell them Big Daddy said to give you the money." That's the way it worked then! Because then he also knew

that he had you. You'd be paying him back right out of your check. We had an OK time then. That was a good era. But then that mine sold out to Massey Coal.

It got to be a hassle at the end. The companies were in it for themselves. The philosophy now is, "Get the coal and get out." It should have taken 35 or 40 years to get the coal out of the mine I worked at in Wolf Creek. They ripped it out in ten years. They bring in this big shovel that can carry an ungodly amount of tonnage in one big swoop. It's massive. It can take the whole top of a hill off. We have floods happening in places that never flooded before, because they're stripping so much that there are no trees to hold back the water. There ain't nothing there now, so the water can come right through. They're saying that they're doing better for us by creating flatlands—they say that we can develop on it. But all they're really helping is themselves.

Now I work out here in my shop fixing up motorcycles. I started collecting motorcycles back in the 70s, as soon as I started working in the mines. The money I made was letting me buy motorcycles. I probably had 25 or 30 of them in my life. I sold them and traded them. I learned how to work on them just by owning them. Word of mouth spread around and people started to bring me their bikes so I could change the oil or do a little work on them. They charge about \$60 an hour at the shops, but I charge about \$15 or a case of beer. Either one. It's a good little hobby.

RUDY HAMMONDS

Photo by Roe Ethridge

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STEVE & DONNY



The Farley brothers live out in this trailer with their mother.





Steve Farley: "I like to color pictures in with markers. I take these magic markers and do it all."

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"My brother collects dolls. This here doll ain't mine. We won this up at the Food City in Louisa. You know those little games where you grab stuff with the crane? My brother Donny won this in one of those! He's lucky. I'm not lucky."

BROTHERS AND BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

Family Ties in the Hills

Me and my brother were born in Columbus, Ohio. Daddy wanted to move back down here to Martin County. Daddy thought he could get him a job here in the mines, but he couldn't get no job there because he didn't have no high school diploma. I was seven years old when we moved back here. We bought this trailer brand-new back in 1976.

My dad got himself a job being a night watchman, looking after the new cars on the car lot. My father left us in 1979. He went back up to Columbus.

People's cruel here. But the good Lord took care of us. In this county, people are so mean. In a little county like this one here, people will talk about you behind your back. They won't say things right to you. If you're not certain people here, they won't kiss you. You have to be, like, with the certain in-crowd here. Like the rich people. But we made it pretty good.

There's a problem with poverty here. My mamaw [grandmother] died when I was 16 years old. She had a big house up there. She got married to this family here and they just moved in. They tried to run us out. My mamaw owned some of the coal in this mountain back here. It's been all stripped out. When my mamaw married to this family here, they stripped all this coal out. We never got no money or hired no lawyers to represent

our case. But the guy who made money off our coal, it never done him no good. He died. He got all that money and bought him a new house but he died and left it. I hope God has mercy on his soul.

My dream has always been to be in a TV commercial. I want to be famous. I like television too. I like to watch movies on AMC. I like Cartoon Network. I like that *Aqua Teen Hunger Force* and that *Family Guy*. I like that *Futurama* too. There's that new one, *Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends*.

We got an 11-year-old cat named Field Mouse. We took her to the doctor and she's got a big old tumor on her stomach. But God kept her around for a pretty good long time. We're pretty lucky for that.

My favorite thing about living here is going to see movies at the new theater we got. On the weekends I go up there and see a movie. That girl Lisa up there, she's real nice to us and she lets us go and see movies for free. We don't pay nothin'.

I quit school when I was about 16 years old. I was gonna graduate in 1988. I was a freshman when I dropped out. My brother Donny quit in 1990 when he was a sophomore. I left school because the other kids was cruel to me. They got onto me and Donny. It's kind of redneck down here.

STEVE FARLEY

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Photo by Jerry Hsu

Steve Farley: "I sit and watch movies most of the time. I mostly like scary movies. You ever see that movie called *The Hills Have Eyes*? I like the new *House of Wax* with Paris Hilton too. My mom bought me all these scary movies. I ain't watched a lot of them yet myself. Last night I watched one called *Black Cat*. It was pretty good. It was kind of strange."



Photo by Jerry Hsu

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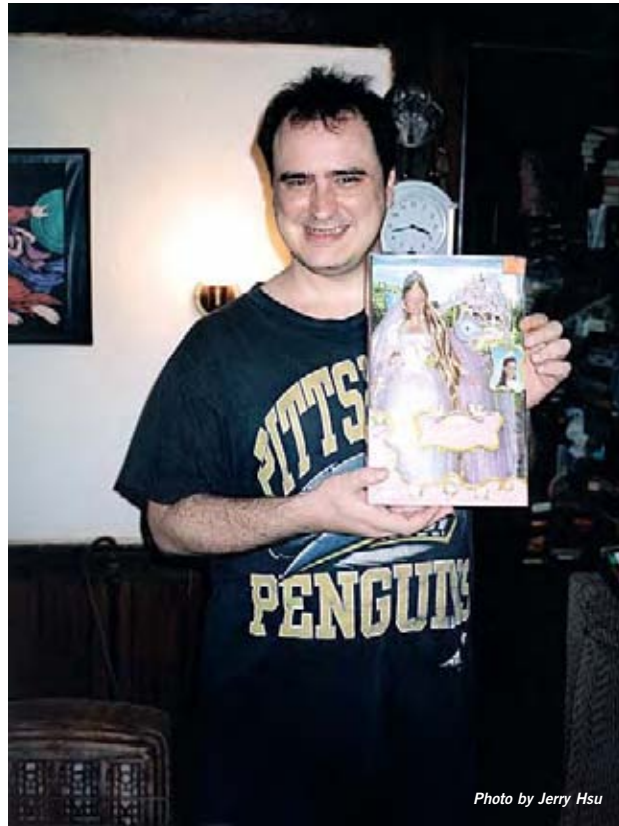


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PASSION FOR FASHION

My Ideal Girl

I like collecting Barbies. I got this new one at KB's in Ashland. I collect them, I play with them, I just love the pretty outfits they wear. She's a very beautiful girl! I first got interested in Barbies when I was 22. I was out looking for girlfriends all the time. One time I was at somebody's house and there was a little girl there who'd gotten a Barbie for Christmas. I said, "Man, she's awful good-looking to be a doll." I decided, I think I'm gonna start collecting 'em soon. I got started and I can't quit! I think I spend \$20 per month. My absolute favorite is the one in Fashion Fever clothes. She has a fur dress or a fur coat with fur trim and a butterfly belt buckle.

Some of the girls here are, like, real preppy and snobby. It's kind

of who you are in this town. Like, the county judge's son or daughter, or the kids of people who own big companies. People really want to date them.

I've got Bratz too, and Barbies and some celebrity dolls. Here's a *That's So Raven* doll.

A while ago, our hot-water heater was leaking so I had to move all of them. I don't want to get them damaged. Then, later on, I was gonna stack them. I stacked one side, but now I gotta restack the other side too.

Most of the time I don't like to get into it with nobody. I try to be a friendly guy. I don't want nobody to have hard feelings about me.

DONNY FARLEY

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CRISIS AT THE COURTHOUSE

What Exactly Is to be Done?

The town elders have gathered at the Inez courthouse to talk about what the heck they're going to do to save their town from its veritable sinkhole of problems—everything from financial disaster to drug addiction to total isolation.

Vice: OK, guys. We need to fix this place up. Where do we start? What's the biggest problem?

Father Ralph Beiting [local Catholic priest and advocate for the poor—pictured on right with white hair]: My feeling is that we are losing the best minds that we have. Our young people get educated and don't want to come back here. I think we are kept poor as an area because of that. They aren't here to be leaders, and the reason they are not staying here is that there are no jobs.

So we're left with an old population. According to the surveys taken by the University of Louisville, we are now the oldest place in America. We have a higher percentage of people 65 and over than anywhere else.

We also have a drug problem here. It's breaking up so many families. When you don't have a solid family, you aren't going to



Photo by Patrick O'Dell

Richard: It all comes back to the mindset. We've got people here that are fourth-generation welfare recipients.

be raising a solid family of your own.

Richard Young [mayor of Inez]: The state of the drug-abuse problem here is severe. Grossly severe. The guy that used to be the sheriff here told me that the guys out here are either buying or selling, and you always know who's going to be selling if you look at who just had their prescription filled. You don't get a prescription from some guy down the street. You get one from a doctor. We don't have enough manpower here—or I'd imagine anywhere else in Eastern Kentucky—to monitor the prescriptions that go through the drugstores.

This same man who used to be sheriff here was asking me, "How do you arrest a guy for driving erratically when you pull him over if he's on pills he's prescribed for and he's got them sitting right there in a legal container with his name on it?"

Christi Kirk [executive director, Martin County Executive Development Authority]: That's all true. The drug problem is sending a new popula-

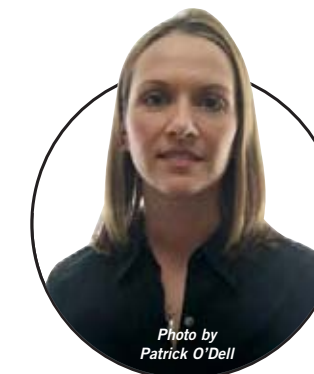


Photo by Patrick O'Dell

Christi: There are years of damage to change.

tion into poverty due to addiction. There is also a high percentage of accidents on these roads. That's because of these coal trucks out here. A lot of people become addicts after they're injured in an accident. If your family and everyone you know lives in poverty and all that you see is public assistance, then the incentives to change aren't there. And obviously, that group of people feels excluded. They feel different from those of us who get up every morning and go to work. I feel as though they truly believe that they are different. So there's insecurity there too.

We've also lost a lot of small-business owners because of Wal-Marts opening up.

All of that affects our quality of life. If you don't have things to offer, people are going to go to other areas.

Father Beiting, you mentioned how our youth are leaving. I was one of those. By the time I was a sophomore in high school, I wanted out. I felt like I didn't belong here. I've been back here for two years now. Pride in your community has to start very young. If you don't have that, you're never going to consider coming back here. It took me 18 years to realize how important it was to come back here, and it still isn't easy.

We do have wonderful agencies here that help support families who are dealing with abuse, whether it's substance, physical, or emotional.

But the poor still suffer from that feeling of not belonging. It's such a hurdle. There are years of damage to change. It's hard to feel optimistic. I can't imagine—if my life and my well-being depended on a check that I was receiving from the government—how that would affect my feelings.

Father Beiting: I do a lot of traveling all over Eastern Kentucky, doing preaching out of doors. I was in Leslie County and I had finished talking and I saw this little boy sitting over on the porch. I went over to him and said, "Son, what do you want to be when you grow up?" He said, "I want to be like my pap." I said, "What does your pap do?" and he said, "He rocks." I said, "Does he work for the stone quarry?" He said, "No, he rocks in his rocker and waits for his check to come in every month. I want to be like that."

The kids' brains don't get expanded. We have to get involved, and we aren't going to end the poverty in these counties without doing that.

Kelly Callaham [county judge]: I think our biggest trouble is the mentality. We must change the mentality of the younger folks for sure.

But I also think we have a per capita problem. The bigger cities are full of poverty too, but it's packed in more.

This is just my opinion, but I'm usually a pretty straight shooter. I think that LBJ showing up here was the worst thing that ever happened to Martin County. Every year, the anniversary of that visit puts the spotlight on us again. TV crews come out. In '95, CBS came in and set up lights and cameras in my office. I told them everything they didn't want to hear. I told them that we were doing great. I told them, "Don't go to the hollers and find somebody," but of course they did. It's still my opinion that there's just as much poverty out of the rest of Appalachia as there is here.

But when Mommy and Daddy are lying around the house all the time doing nothing, the kids think, "That looks like a pretty good life



Skeeze: Everybody that really wants a job can get out there and get one.

there. I might as well try that too." They are actually very intelligent people, if just for the fact that they've learned how to work the system. We have a system here where if you can learn the ropes, you can get by wonderfully.

The county has changed a lot since I was a boy. We had a well at home, but now probably 95 percent of the people in our county have water.

I been in the funeral business for a long time, and you see very few families come though my funeral home that don't have the ability to pay. We'll go to the house and it may not be in the best conditions that ever was, but when they come in and make arrangements, they pay for their funerals. So it may look like they're poor, but in actual reality, they're not.

Vice: So why do people represent poor Southerners as hillbillies?

Kelly: Well, when you're reading the papers and the magazines, you'll see that good news don't sell. Pick up the *Lexington Herald*. I think they have a drive like a magnet to go up to where people have to shoo the chickens off their porch.

Christi: That's certainly a part of it. There was a photo of the day LBJ came here in the local paper, back when it happened. My grandparents clipped it out because my father and his grandfather were in it. The photo caption says, "On his poverty tour of the area, the president passed through the streets of Inez, past lines of ragged school-children, many of them wearing hand-me-downs and ill-fitting shoes." This ran in the *Louisville Courier-Journal* the Sunday after Johnson visited Martin County. On the 30th anniversary of his visit, the stories were basically the same.

Vice: Well, it seems like there are two populations down here: People who give a shit and are trying to effect change vs. poor people in the hollers who are mired in their living rooms.

Connie Necessary [Kentucky Works employment specialist]: In dealing with these people, we have to change the way they look at things. We have talented and skilled people here. They are far from being ignorant. They just need a push in the right direction.

You may have someone that really does not want to go to work, but you just need to keep talking to them and supporting them. I'll have a single mother come in and say, "I don't have any skills." If you're a mother, you've got skills. You can cook, sew, and clean. Those are skills. But they don't look at it that way. They say, "I don't have any education, therefore I'm nothing."

Vice: Do the really poor people here have biases against the townspeople who are trying to change things? I bet some of them do.

Christi: I think it can make them feel more separate. It's as though they have no part in the changes that might affect them. Often they don't vote, so they feel like somebody else is making decisions in the county.

Father Beiting: We don't have consistency. I started Bible schools at two different towns here, where we'd get them for a week and take them out on boats in the lake, do all kinds of things. But then we wouldn't see them for a year. They'd get back up into their hollers and all the enthusiasm would be drained away. We don't have anything that continues. We need a yearlong program.



Kelly: I think that LBJ showing up here was the worst thing that ever happened to us.

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Sometimes our schools put too much emphasis on sports. I had a guy working for me who had gone to school in Johnson County, just next door to here. When I got him, he'd finished high school and had a diploma, and he couldn't read or write. He was the best quarterback they ever had, so he got through.

David Michael [executive vice president, Inez Deposit Bank]: We started an intern program at the bank 20 years ago. We take students from the county high schools and let them work for us. They earn some money while they work at the bank, but they also get to learn.

We've had local leaders, the governor, authors, and more come in and talk to the interns.

We also need to work as a region—not just with each county on its own. We need Appalachia to work together as a region.

You can look around these counties and see people who you may put a poverty label on, but not all of them are dissatisfied. Right or wrong, some are happy with the simple life. We want them to do better as a whole, but in some cases they're doing what they want.

To me, jobs are the key to allowing people to get out of poverty. Still, if you're offered a service job at minimum wage or slightly above, and you've got one or two kids that you have to get to school, maybe you're a single parent, and if you can go out and make \$12,000 a year working—if you compare that to what you might get on public assistance, there isn't much incentive. It's a real process to break that family tradition of being on assistance.

Vice: Is it possible to get small businesses to return here?

Christi: I have a friend who's not from here, but moved to Inez with her family about two years ago. More than anything in the world, she wants to own a café in the downtown area. Something simple with a limited menu like bagels and coffee in the mornings. When she goes out and tries to seek advice on finances or work on a business plan, she is always told, "It won't work here." I think the statistics are limiting the people who want to start small businesses here.

Vice: So they're being scared out of even trying. What about getting big corporations to move to town?

Christi: We would love nothing more than to have a company come in and fill up our spec building and create 500 jobs and put these people to work. But sometimes it needs to start small.

Vice: Maybe the federal government needs to send Appalachia more money...

David: Any of us would say we want more, but is more really the best answer? A lot of people here have a lot of pride, and that needs to be overcome. But is more better? I mean, does it make it easier? People can still learn the system and work it.

But as far as more federal aid? Sure. We could use it to continue building up the infrastructure. Improve the roads and electric and water lines.

Vice: But in non-monetary terms, do you think the rest of the country gives a damn about Appalachia? Just to play devil's advocate, why should they?



David: Right or wrong, some are happy with the simple life.

David: We only have one resource here and that's coal.

Vice: Coal is pretty important.

David: It's been our backbone for years. We've tried to diversify, but it's hard to do that when you've got that mainstay. The number of years in which we can mine coal easily and efficiently is numbered.

Father Beiting: We have to figure out how to produce small businesses here. Agriculture, for example.

Christi: Oh yeah.

Father Beiting: I started some greenhouses in Jackson County and they're still in business after 30 years there. And what about recycling? What about the timber that's a byproduct of the coal industry? We should

process it into furniture. These are the kinds of things we should do. Maybe they're only going to employ five, ten, or fifteen people, but boy oh boy are they going to get a spark going.

Connie: Transportation is a big, big issue here. People don't have enough money to get their own vehicle and they have to depend on others to get around. So the jobs may be here, but how are they going to get to the jobs? I hear that all the time: "You can get me a job, but I don't have anyone to take me." The work ethic is here, and they are proud people.

Housing is an issue here too. People who live in low-income housing get a rent increase when they get a job. That leads them to question why they should even get a job.

Richard: It all comes back to the mindset. We've got people here who are fourth-generation welfare recipients. I've heard the stories too, where these kids say they're going to do the same as their dad and grandpa did. When they get through school, they're signing up for welfare. Why go to school at all? If the only inducement is to get that check, why even bother? There used to be an inducement to work. If you didn't work, you didn't get anything to eat! We don't have that situation now. If I don't have a job, I go down and sign up. After I'm on the check for a while, why should I want to get a job? Especially when most of the jobs are low pay and don't have nearly the benefits these people are getting for staying home and watching TV.

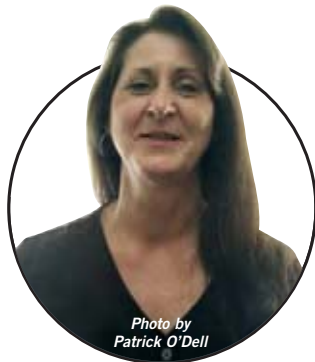
Vice: Skeeze, you were here the day LBJ came. Do you remember it? Skeeze Ward [awesome old guy who's lived here forever]: I didn't even know he was coming until the day before. The sheriff was out there with a bunch of Secret Service men. But I suppose everything went well that day.

I think we've come a long way since then. We've made a lot of progress. Everybody that really wants a job can get out there and get one. It may not be \$10 an hour, but you can go out and put yourself to it.

But I still think the main problem is that our school system is going down. We have less students. We have to do something to keep the better students here. We've got to have some kind of a system.

Vice: Well, that's that then. Thanks guys.

INTERVIEW MODERATED BY JESSE PEARSON



Connie: People here are far from being ignorant. They just need a push in the right direction.

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The slurry flood taking a swingset along with it. Still from the documentary film *Sludge*.

THE GREAT FLOOD

The Coal Industry Drops Thick Black Piss Over the Hills of Kentucky

In October 2000, there was a flood in Inez, Kentucky. The EPA called it the worst environmental catastrophe in the history of the eastern United States. It was way worse than the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill. Mickey and Nina McCoy are a married couple who teach at the local high school. They are also members of Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, a group of grassroots activists who fight against the perpetual environmental rape that their part of the world has been undergoing for decades. The McCoy's invited Vice over for a dinner of baked chicken, corn-bread salad, and Kentucky bourbon and told us all about the Armageddon that coal is wreaking on their hometown.

Mickey: They called it a slurry spill, but I like to call it the slurry flood. A spill is when your daughter reaches across the table to get a cookie and accidentally knocks over her little brother's glass of milk. That's a spill. You go in and get some paper towels and handle it. This spill we're talking about here was 350 million gallons of sludge and slurry.

When coal is washed in a processing plant, they pump the wastewater up a hill to what they call an impoundment pond. Well, this particular pond was 72 acres. A pond is something where you let your Boy Scout troop come in and catch all the bluegill because they're getting real thick and all. This was not a pond. This was 72 fucking acres. It was a lake.

350 million gallons of sludge burst through the bottom of this lake into an old



Photo by
Jerry Hsu

mineshaft below it. Now, the maps showed that there was a 75-foot-thick barrier between the bottom of that lake and these old underground mine works. It was actually like ten feet. It gave way.

Oh, one more thing. In 1994, there was another mistake at the "pond" and they were allowed to pump some slurry back into that shaft. So when the pond bottom broke in 2000, what we got was not only the shit from that pond but also the stuff that was already in those mineshafts. A lot of mineshafts are used like dumps. You throw old batteries in there. You throw old barrels of oil in there. Jimmy Hoffa could be at the bottom of one of these slurry ponds.

So all this slurry came out. It was moving so slowly that it backed up and burst out another mineshaft too. So it came out of two separate shafts. It popped out of that second part into Wolf Creek, which empties into the Tug Fork. The Tug Fork is where we get our reservoir water. They had all this shit above a reservoir.



photo: Adam Amengual

Adam Amengual
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SOMEONE ONCE SAID TO ME,
"YOU'RE EITHER A PICTURE
TAKER OR A PICTURE MAKER."
I THINK I'M A BIT OF BOTH.



HEAVY ROTATION

OUTFITTING THE "REBELLION FOR AUTHENTICITY"



Massey's cleanup effort ended up costing \$46 million—and many say it only scratched the surface. Still from *Sludge*.

Nina: Not only that. If the flood hadn't happened to have bust through that other shaft in addition to the first one, people would have suffocated. It would have come down in full force on people's homes.

Mickey: This was bigger than Buffalo Creek. It just didn't kill anybody. [On February 26, 1972, a coal-company dam burst in Buffalo Creek, West Virginia. 125 people were killed, 1,100 were injured, and over 4,000 were left homeless—Ed.] We as Americans think, "How many people died? None? OK, casualties controlled."

I remember when Buffalo Creek happened. Everybody remembers Buffalo Creek back here. We saw the funerals on the television for weeks. It carried whole damn houses down with it. And this could have been another Buffalo Creek if it hadn't gone out through two areas. If it had just gone straight down Wolf Creek, those people would have been smothered in their sleep at night.

Nina: And in '94 they knew it was leaking. They were told to seal it. They were told *how* to seal it. But we never, ever checked to make sure that they did it. So they knew, basically, that it was going to break.

Mickey: Massey Coal knew, and Massey didn't give a shit. When the people came in here from the EPA and the Division of Surface Mining, they all set up there on a hill on Massey Coal property.

Massey didn't even warn people that the slurry had spilled. I had a relative who lived at the last house up in the area it spilled tell me about it. He was one of the first ones hit. People didn't come by telling him about it. They knew a flood had happened, but they

didn't come by and warn people.

Massey Coal does in Appalachia just about what in the hell Massey Coal wants to do. That's because Massey Coal knows where to put their money. They put it in the pockets of the right congressmen and the right senators—the people who can call off the dogs that are supposed to protect us. Massey can do more than any other coal company here because they are so big and powerful. Massey is one of the grand outlaws of the coal industry. They're a bunch of sonofabitches located in Richmond, Virginia, with stockholders all over the country. They don't care how they leave the

Massey Coal does in Appalachia just about what in the hell Massey Coal wants to do.

communities they mine in. Sure, they give pennies to the churches to keep them quiet. Or they fund sports programs to keep the communities quiet. But when the coal is gone and Massey is gone, they won't give a damn about me, my wife, my kids, or my grandchildren. They done got what they want, and that's the black gold.

Nina: We both went to Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. One of the professors talked about Massey. He said some things that weren't flattering. Within 15 minutes, the president of the university

called that professor and said, "You don't ever talk about Massey."

Mickey: This is a university we're talking about. In a college, you're supposed to have free thought. Even in Appalachian colleges. [laughs] But here's one that the coal magnates give so much money to that the university has to limit free thought and limit the truth if it's going to hurt their contributors.

Mountaintop removal, simply put, is taking apart a whole damn mountain to get to a two- or three-foot seam of coal. Then you take the unprofitable part of the mountain, what the coal companies call the "overburden," and you dump it in a holler or you dump it where a stream used to run. You pile the overburden up there and you create a mountain with a plateau on top of it as you dump and dump and dump. You've heard of the term "hundred-year flood"? Our hundred-year flood is happening about every 18 months. Harry Caudill, one of the best writers and thinkers ever to come out of Appalachia, said that coal has "always cursed the land it's torn from."

Nina: There are no studies on the long-term effects of mountaintop removal. I'm sure that the mining engineers are all saying that this is just making level ground and it's going to make Appalachia prosper because the only thing wrong with this land is the hills—if you level the hills, we'll be just like Delaware or New Jersey. That's, I'm sure, why local coal-company owners think they're doing just a wonderful job for us.

We made a citizen's complaint to check on the work of the Division of Surface Mining. We aren't allowed to go and see what a pri-



Slurry-enriched silt taken from the banks of the Tug Fork four years after the spill. Still from *Sludge*.

vate mine is doing, but we can see if the Division of Surface Mining is doing what they should be doing.

Mickey: I think it was the first complaint of its sort in Martin County.

Nina: According to the law, you can go along with the Division of Surface Mines.

Mickey: They police the coal companies—supposedly. Some say they also have new VCRs in their trucks at Christmas time and a turkey in every stocking. I don't know about that, but I've heard tales.

Nina: It was an interesting experience going out there. We went with Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, which is our grassroots organization. We took a mining engineer with us. We had to wear hardhats and steel-toed boots and everything. The first people we saw when we got up there were looking kind of nervous. They were like, "Well, come over here to the mine shack."

Mickey: That's a six-by-eight shack.

Nina: We met the little guy from the Division of Surface Mining—bless his heart. He was this scared-looking man. I think I was about as big as he was.

Mickey: Yeah, and you're little.

Nina: So we went over to the guard shack and we all went inside. It was tiny. There were four of us and about six of them—big old burly men lining the wall, and then there was that little man.

Mickey: But then there was the parting of the seas...

Nina: Everything got quiet and in came Jim Booth. He's the owner of the biggest mine around here. It's called Czar Coal. You could feel it all around the room, like, "They'll be sorry now."

Mickey: He goes right up to the guy from the Division of Surface Mining and goes, "Who are you?" Then he goes to another guy and says, "Who are you?" Then he waves his hand around over toward us and says, "I know those two."

Nina: This is the kind of intimidation this Surface Mining guy has to face when he goes up there. If he's seriously doing his job, this is

It's just like living in a landscape that's dotted with time bombs.

what he faces.

We found out after this visit that Jim Booth's partner's brother-in-law told on him for some safety violation. Evidently, they took this guy into that same shack we were in and beat him with a hose. That's probably what they were thinking about doing to us! *[laughs]*

Mickey: It can get you to worrying about walking from the house to the garage at night.

Nina: I don't think they see us as that kind of a threat. They've labeled us tree huggers and liberals and that kind of takes care of it. Whatever we say, they're just, "There goes Mickey and Nina again."

At the same time, people are coming to us. I had one little girl at the school where I teach come up to me with a little notebook and say, "My dad wants you to have this." I said, "OK, what is it?" She told me that it was his testimony to the Mine Safety and Health Administration that they didn't use. He just wanted me to black out his name. He doesn't work for the coal company anymore.

One man told us that he was planning on going hunting on the day of the flood, and he was going to take his four-wheeler. As he came driving by, some guy said, "No, no, you can't go this way. Something's happened." Then he looked through the woods—it was still early and the sun was just coming up—and he could see the black of the coal slurry going by. He thought of his family, downstream from this spill and still asleep. He went down and grabbed them all right out of the bed.

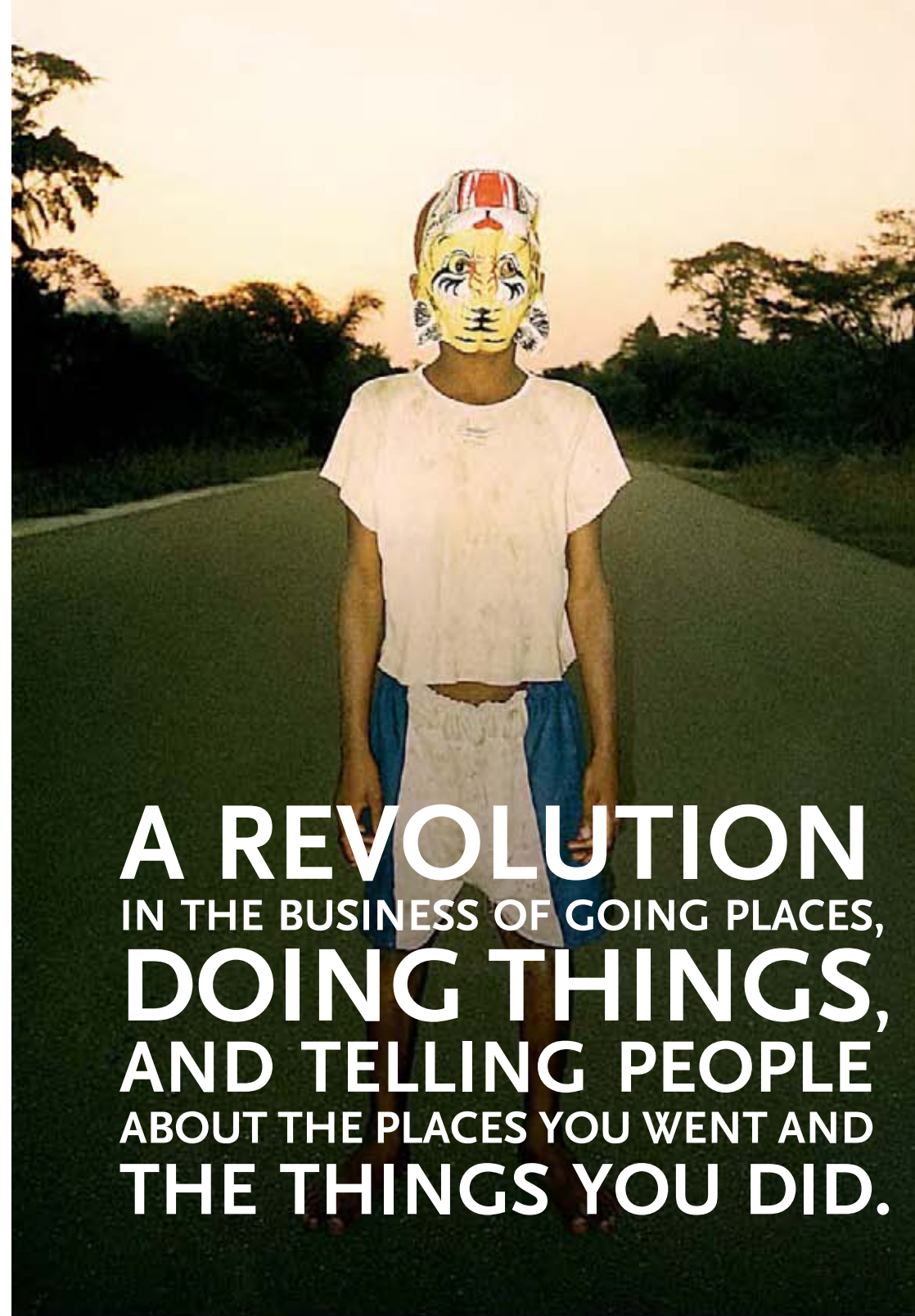
Mickey: Massey Coal has no regard for life. I'll stand on a stack of Bibles and say that.

Nina: I figured it out. These spills happen every six years or so. It's just like living in a landscape that's dotted with time bombs.

Mickey: I do think that strip mining is the work of the devil. I am against all strip mining and all mountaintop removal. Some people here think, "Well, if we don't let them mine here, they're gonna go somewhere else and mine." They can't go anywhere else to mine! The fucking coal is here!

Nina: It's not like they're going to outsource this one.

INTERVIEWED BY VICE STAFF



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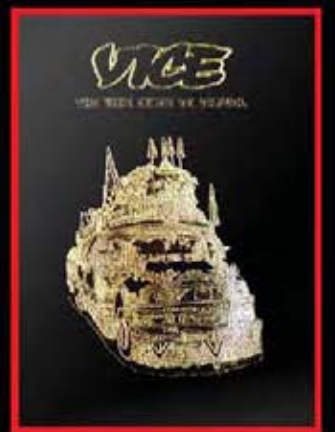
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STRIPPED MOUNTAIN



Photo by Vivian Stockman of the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

Before: The little building front and center is one of the few remaining homeplaces in the mountains outside of Mud, West Virginia. The majority of the town has been uprooted by the expansion of Arch Coal's Hobet-21 surface mine, which covers over 12,000 acres (nearly 50 million square miles) of former hills and hollers. This picture was taken in June 2005.



Photo by Vivian Stockman, flyover courtesy of SouthWings.

After: And here's the same spot this past October. The section to the lower right that looks like green-painted concrete is actually the "reclaimed" land from an earlier removal. Mining companies are supposed to recreate the "approximate original contour" of the mountaintops they remove and restore as much vegetation "as possible." Ha ha ha. How about words?

STRIPPED MOUNTAIN



Photo by John Cox

Before: A handful of Appalachian mountaintops peeking out of the mist in Perry County, Kentucky. The Cumberland Plateau, on which most of Eastern Kentucky is situated, is one of the only regions in North America that escaped the last ice age without ending up underwater. As a result, its mountains house some of the oldest forests in the world, containing thousands of often rare plant-and-animal species.



Photo by John Cox

After: Of course things like "biodiversity" and "precariously balanced ecosystems" don't mean shit to companies intent on getting at coal seams the quickest and cheapest way possible. That's why they use equipment like the dragline seen above, 20-story behemoths that can haul over 1 million pounds of earth at a time (if you're unclear just how fucking huge this thing is, use the full-size semi truck on the road to the left of it as a reference). Another fun effect of this steroidal mechanization is that it's reduced the workforce to a third of its 70s size. Good work, guys.

STRIPPED MOUNTAIN



Photo by Roe Ethridge

Even years after the work is done, you can still spot a strip-mined mountain a mile away.

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Photo by Jerry Hsu



Photo by Jerry Hsu

WALK IN MY SHOES

I Dare You

I'm originally from West Virginia. My sisters all moved down to Ohio for work and they just stayed there. I didn't go because I couldn't leave my momma. See, she had her legs took off from diabetes. It's called sugar diabetes. It's like a blood disorder that gets in your bones, and if you hurt yourself a very little bit, like a little cut or something, it won't heal. It'll turn black and rot. My mom hurt her feet, and they had to take both of them off up to her knees. How she hurt them was, she burned one of them. She was burning some fire outside—some trash—and a hairspray can blew up and come back and hit her foot. And it never would heal. She took care of it, but the diabetes was so high in her bloodstream that it wouldn't heal. It just turned black and they had to take it off. And her other one, she dropped a can of corn on top of it and cut it, and it wouldn't heal, so she lost the other one. She lost the one in 1969 or '70 and the other one was in the 80s. She was in a wheelchair for 20-some years.

My oldest brother now—he's the pastor of my church—he's diabetic and he has the awfulest legs you ever saw. He won't let anyone take them off, either. He's got big old sores. They're all swelled up and black-looking. Have you ever seen a cut scab over? That's what the big old sores on his legs look like. And they're all black. He can walk, but eventually they'll rot. Then he'll have to have them took off—he won't have no choice. Longer he waits, the more and more of them

he'll have to get taken off. See, what diabetes does, it eats right down to the bone. It's like a virus. It eats right down to the bone and it'll eat through the flesh and everything. It's not a nice thing to have.

Mom and Dad's both dead. Dad died 23 years ago and my mom's been dead eight years. My sister-in-law and me took care of my mom. My sister-in-law lived with her, and I lived over here. I'd work every day, go over and sit with her every night, and then work the next day. I was over there with her every night. That gave my sister-in-law a breather, because she had three little small children. I'd sleep there, if you could call it sleep. I'd sleep at the foot of her bed on a cot. You'd go to sleep and then she'd holler out for you and wake you up. She'd wake up every night. My mom had—I don't know if you'd call it Alzheimer's or what—but something like it. When she woke up, she'd need to go to the bathroom. We had a potty in the room with her, a potty chair, and we'd take her to the bathroom and I'd sit and read to her a while. She couldn't see due to the diabetes. I'd have to read to her. The Bible or the newspaper.

A week before my mother died, when she knew she was dying, she called all of the family together. Well, none of them showed up but me and my baby brother and my baby sister. The rest of them had their own lives. They didn't want to be fooled with, if you know what I mean. She told me what she wanted for her funeral.

BENJY FERREE LEAVING THE NEST

There are those moments as music fans when you hear something that you instantly feel is substantial and profound. *Leaving The Nest* is one of those records, with surefooted timelessness in an era of trends being cycled and recycled through at an exhausting speed. Musical and historical ghosts of The South haunt the corners of this album like a Faulknerian travelogue while bringing to mind the works of Terrence Malick, whose movies leave it to the viewer to find their own meaning in all the ambiguous beauty.



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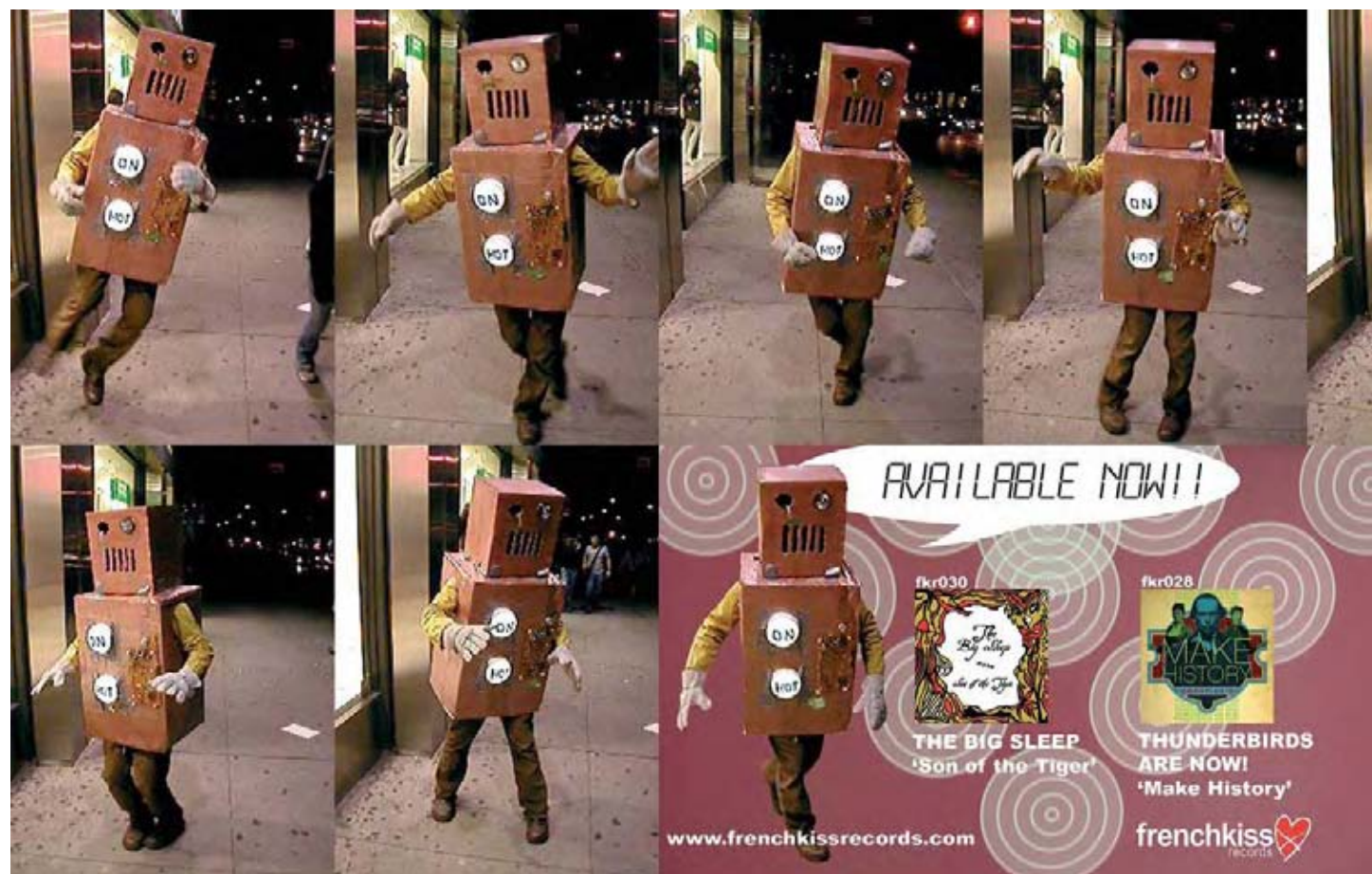
WOMEN OF APPALACHIA



Photo by Jerry Hsu



Photo by Jerry Hsu



She wanted a pink dress with just a little touch of lace around the collar and a little lace around the sleeves. And she didn't want nothing big and fancy, she just wanted a white coffin with gold trim. She told me what music she wanted—"Amazing Grace" and "Mamma's Hands." She told me everything right down to the preacher that she wanted. And she told the preacher, "I want you to chastise them," meaning her kids who wasn't there to see her before she died. You know what chastising means, right? It means, "Put them down. Run them through the coals, make them feel guilty for what they done." And he did. The preacher did. He made them feel guilty for what they'd done to her. He ran them through the mill. He said, "She called you, she knew that she was dying, she wanted to see you, and you fellas wouldn't show up." He got right up in the church house and told it the day they was burying her.

They just stood there and looked at him. After the service was over, they didn't even walk up to the coffin and look at her. They just went out the back door. The good Lord'll deal with them for it. I don't have to say a thing or do a thing. My dad used to say, "Don't say nothing or do nothing that you have to say the word 'sorry' for, because the word 'sorry' is not in the Bible. It's not in the Bible nowhere."

I've been married three times and all three times I married nothin' but trash. I had to work to keep all of 'em up. The first one was Flem. An alcoholic and a wife beater. He used to beat on me. He used to use me for a punching bag. It'd all depend on if somebody ticked him off at work. You know, if he had a good day at work, then he was fine. If he had a bad day at work, I'd hide. I'd know to. If I'd smile at him the wrong way, I'd get slapped. If I'd stand up too fast, he'd beat on me. I was 19 and he was 27. It started about three months after we got married, and then I stayed with him two years.

**I've been married three times
and all three times I married
nothin' but trash. I had to work
to keep all of 'em up.**

My second husband, he was bad too. Robert Hankel. Gambled away everything we could get ahold of. I'd bought a house—he gambled it away. He come up to me and said, "Well, I guess we'll have to find a place to live." I said, "What d'you mean?" He said, "Well, I lost the house." I said, "What do you mean, 'lost the house'?" He said, "I bet it in a poker game and I lost." I said, "To who?" "Man from up around Kermit somewhere." Three days later, the man came and hooked it up and hauled it off. Robert Hankel went to live with his mother and I lived in my car until I had enough money to get a new trailer. I was 22 years old.

The third husband was named Carter Mills. I left him because he wouldn't help me do nothin'. He was a carpenter, and what money he had he either drank it up or smoked it up in pot. I'd cover all the bills, buy all the groceries. I worked three jobs. Drove a bus in the morning, went to work in a restaurant all day, drove a bus that evening, went to another restaurant, and closed it out that night. Worked till midnight. On Saturdays, my only day off, I had three houses I'd clean—my boss's sister, her aunt, and my boss at the other restaurant. I told Carter one day, "If I

have to do it all by myself, I might as well live by myself." In 11 years that we was married, he gave me \$150 to pay the bills with, and he only give me that because I took it. I saw his billfold lying on the table and I picked it up and took it.

I still drive the bus—every morning. Then I go in to the restaurant, Moonie's Fried Chicken. I cook, I clean, I wait on people, I do dishes—everything has to be done. I couldn't find one complaint about Moonie's. They're excellent people to work for. If I had one complaint it's that they don't have enough people working for them. But

Continued on pg. 128



Photo by Patrick O'Dell

CLEAN MOUNTAIN AIR

No More Pills in the Hills

I'm a recovering addict. I was a junkie. My drug of choice was cocaine, crack... Whatever I could shoot up, basically. My dad bailed me out of jail, the workhouse in Columbus. He brought me back up here and after about a week he had me thrown in jail in Floyd County to sober me up. I was there for 22 days until he finally bailed me out again. While I was there, I got the realization of, "God, I don't want to do this again." So he brought me home and I looked up a friend of mine who I'd gone to school with up here. She

had moved away, but then she went through a divorce and moved back home too. I called her mom up to try and get ahold of her and her mom was like, "Well, she's here. She's living here now." She works at the health department, as it turns out, and she told me, "Get ready. I'm taking you to an NA meeting." I've been sober over six months now. I spend all my extra time at the Catholic community center here, helping the sisters and doing whatever I can to stay busy and stay sober.



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Photo by Jerry Hsu



Photo by Jerry Hsu

They just put me in drug court last week. It's set up by the court system pretty much all over Kentucky. There are three phases to it, and they just put me in the first phase. I have to call in seven days a week and enter a code in, and then they tell me if I'm getting drug-tested that day or not. This morning, I entered my code at 7 o'clock in the morning and they told me I had to be there between 8:30 and 9:45 to get drug-tested. They give me no warning in advance. I went Monday, Tuesday, and then another time today, Thursday.

Every Wednesday we have to meet at the courthouse. If you're doing well, they move you up to the second phase, where you can get drug-tested up to three times a week. Then, in phase three, you get tested one time a week. Then, after the program, you get tested randomly throughout the month. The program lasts a year and a half. They require you to go to different counseling and meetings, and you have to bring proof back to them that you went. That way, they're keeping you sober not just through the drug testing—because if you miss the drug testing, you go to jail. Last week, a guy tested dirty and they required him to go to the SAFE meeting. That's this organization out here in Lawrence County. It's very faith-based and spiritual. They made him go to that meeting and speak in front of everybody. It was the first time he had tested dirty.

They try to work with you, but if you're testing dirty, missing your tests, or missing counseling, the sheriff will come up wherever you are, put you in handcuffs, and take you off to jail. They just done that last week to somebody. People just give up trying. It was an example, even though the sheriff told her, "Look, I'm not trying to make an

example out of you. This is just what happens." Either way, she's gonna spend the next 12 months in jail.

I need to surround myself with positive people now because drugs are everywhere around here. You can drive down the street and it's like, you know this house, this house, and this house have drug dealers in there. People here sell drugs just to make money since it's so poor. I know people that go to the doctor in three different towns to get scripts, and then they sell the drugs here. So I can't associate with anybody I knew in my past. An addict knows where it's at. It's like a sixth sense, and it's weird—I can go down the street and know who's using, who's not. We just have a knack for it, I guess. Through drug court, I've met a couple of girls that I used to party with back in high school. They're like, "Don't you remember us?" And I'm like, "Yeah, I do, and apparently you're no better off than I am." So I don't associate with them. We don't need to stay in contact.

The drug problem is huge here because there's nothing else for people to do. There's virtually nothing. I mean, there's a skating rink, but there's really nowhere for kids to go. They have to go to Paintsville or Ashland for the movies, which are like 45 minutes away. I have a friend in drug court who is trying so hard to stay sober. He'll go to the courthouse and stay there all day long just to stay clean. He don't wanna be home at all. I guess there's someone using there. He told us about it in a meeting. Just yesterday, I saw him setting on the guardrail out on the road. That's what he was doing to avoid going home. Sitting on the side of the road and trying to pass the time is a real option here.

SHERRY COOK

People here sell drugs just to make money since it's so poor. I know people that go to the doctor in three different towns to get scripts, and then they sell the drugs here.

FAVOURITE SONS

Down Beside Your Beauty



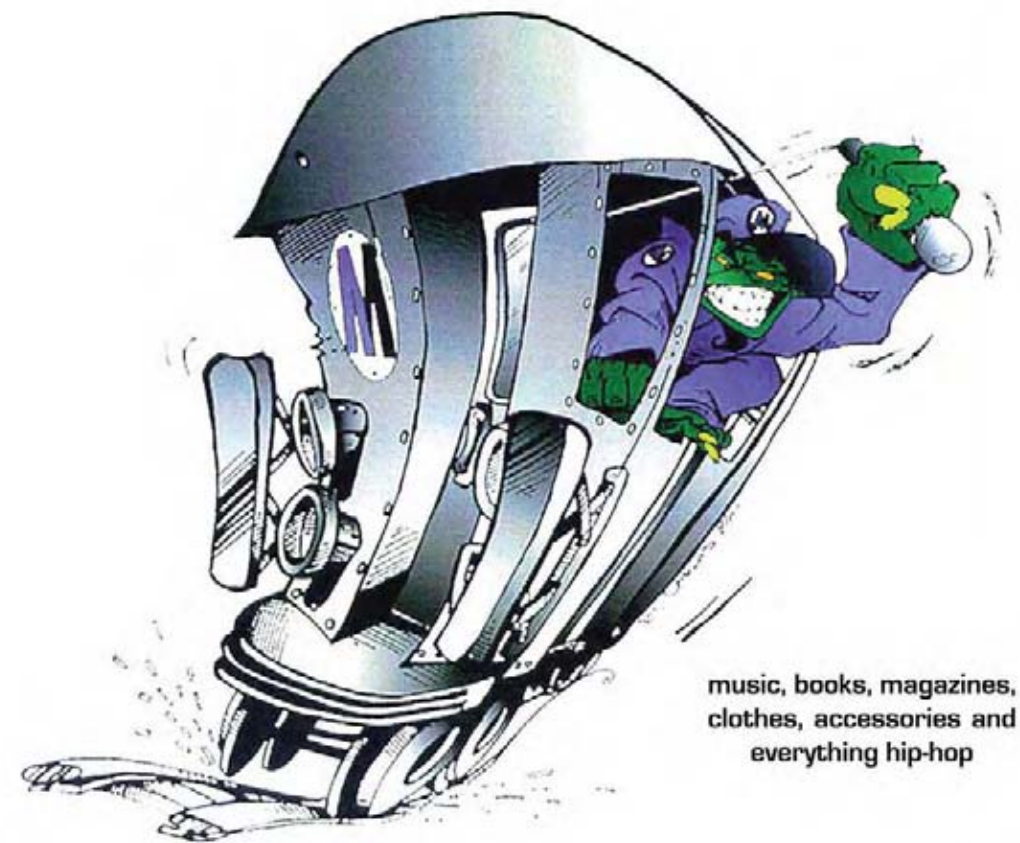
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"They just released one of 2006's best rock records, *Down Beside Your Beauty*, bursting with catchy Iggy/Lou Reed-flavored full-bodied nuggets." VILLAGE VOICE

"Favourite Sons trade in what the Waterboys' Mike Scott would call 'The Big Music,' a grand, anthemic sound that soars on emotion and muscular musicianship. Rabid bloggerati have already anointed them serious contenders for the Next Big Thing of 2006." LA WEEKLY

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Photo by Patrick O'Dell

MY MANSION

A Home of My Own

I grew up in what I guess you'd call a chicken coop. It was this place that used to be a chicken house. It had concrete floors, but we made a living place out of it. Eventually it burnt down. It was rough living there. It was hard when I was a child. I've worked since I was 12. I started out just sitting with people. I'd go out and sit with old people. I wanted to work any way I could so I could get out

of that chicken coop. It had one little coal-and-wood stove for heat, and that didn't warm it up adequately. It was not good. We'd cook on an electric stove, but sometimes there wasn't enough food. There was always something like fried potatoes at night, and we'd each get a serving—enough to keep us from being hungry. We used to get commodity-program cheese too, and we'd eat cheese sandwiches.



Photo by Patrick O'Dell



Photo by Patrick O'Dell

My dad had a rough time. He was a drunkard when I was growing up. He isn't one now, praise the Lord. My sister wanted to marry at 13, and she got mad at my dad because he didn't want her to. So she went and said some abusive things about my father. My brother said some stuff too. Daddy and him used to romp just like you do with your child, but my brother had nosebleeds, so he had blood all over his shirt and the law enforcement believed him when he and my sister went to make these charges against my father. My daddy spent a year and four days incarcerated in the county jail. He developed a nerve problem while he was in there. That's why Mommy had to raise us kids. The two kids who accused my father got put in foster care and then got sent back after Daddy was sent to jail.

Mommy did not drive. She had to walk everywhere she went, and she usually had four kids following behind her. This all happened out in Rowan County. Now, a judge out there told us that if we moved out of the county, Daddy would get out of jail. So we moved counties and that was when we found the chicken coop to rent. As a child, I was kind of embarrassed, but it was a roof over my head and a place to sleep. Still, other kids made fun of us. We lived there for 11 years and then it burnt.

My mom is very sick now. She has diabetes. Her liver and kidneys have shut down and she's had nine heart attacks. My dad is now a Christian man. He does not like to miss a day of church. My brothers and sisters all draw a check. I'm the only employed child out of all of us. I don't know what made me different from all of them. The Lord knows, I guess.

I got married at 17. My husband and I were living in a house that was falling apart. I had a little boy and knew that his needs had to be

met. The place was heated with kerosene and that aggravated my son's asthma. My husband was working at a little gas station, but it closed down and we both started seeking employment. I got a job at a place that helps poor people get their heat. That was when I was 18. We separated from my husband and moved out. I currently live in low-income housing and that's not a good place to live. It's an apartment. I've been there for about four months, and they don't check up on it like they need to. I stepped just outside of my home, left the back door open, and went two doors down for a minute. While I was gone, somebody snuck in and took \$75 from my purse that I had planned on getting my electric bill paid with. Also, it has no lighting in the living room. I've also heard, not actually

witnessed but heard, that there's drugs around there. I'm not one to raise my child around drugs and thieves. The drugs are raging in Appalachia here. I mean, I've heard about kids going to school with fumes—from the meth labs that their parents are running—on them so strong that teachers were getting sick.

I'm 33 years of age now and all I can remember is poverty. There's not a lot to offer here in Appalachia. There are some people here who are willing to help, like the Catholic Church, which helped me to get this trailer here. I'm not too picky about how it's going to look inside since I was raised very, very, very poor. I'm thankful for whatever I get. I don't care if it matches. For the kitchen I was thinking about doing Americana. My boy wants to decorate his room with wrestling figurines. I'll leave the living room real simple.

I come from nothing. This is my first home that I have owned, and it's a mansion to me. It's going to be my mansion.

DELPHI FITCHPATRICK

I'm 33 years of age now and all I can remember is poverty. There's not a lot to offer here in Appalachia.

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WOMEN OF APPALACHIA



Photo by Patrick O'Dell

MOUNTAIN MOMMA

Destiny Steps In

I'm 21 and I was raised in Louisa, Kentucky. I love it here. It's peaceful. It's quiet. I have two kids, Destiny and Jacob. They're one and two years old. I'm raising them on my own because their dad was unfaithful. He pays child support and he sees them once a week for about four or five hours. I met him when I was working at Pizza Hut in Paintsville. We met up there and we were friends for almost a year before we dated or anything. He used to run around with my older brother all the time. We were together for close to

three years. Then he decided he didn't want a family, he didn't want kids, and he didn't want the responsibility. So he started running around. I ended up catching him. His manager at the Pizza Hut called me and told me to watch out. It's common for people my age to have kids down here. I know a girl who's 18 and she's pregnant with her fourth kid. I couldn't imagine doing that! I know a 16-year-old who has two now. I never regret anything myself, though. Just to look at Destiny and Jacob, it's worth it.

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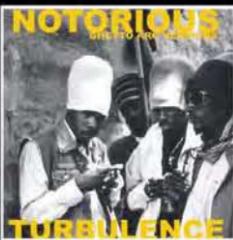
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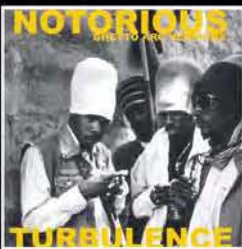
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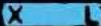


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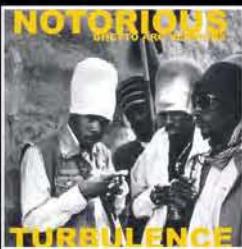
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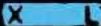


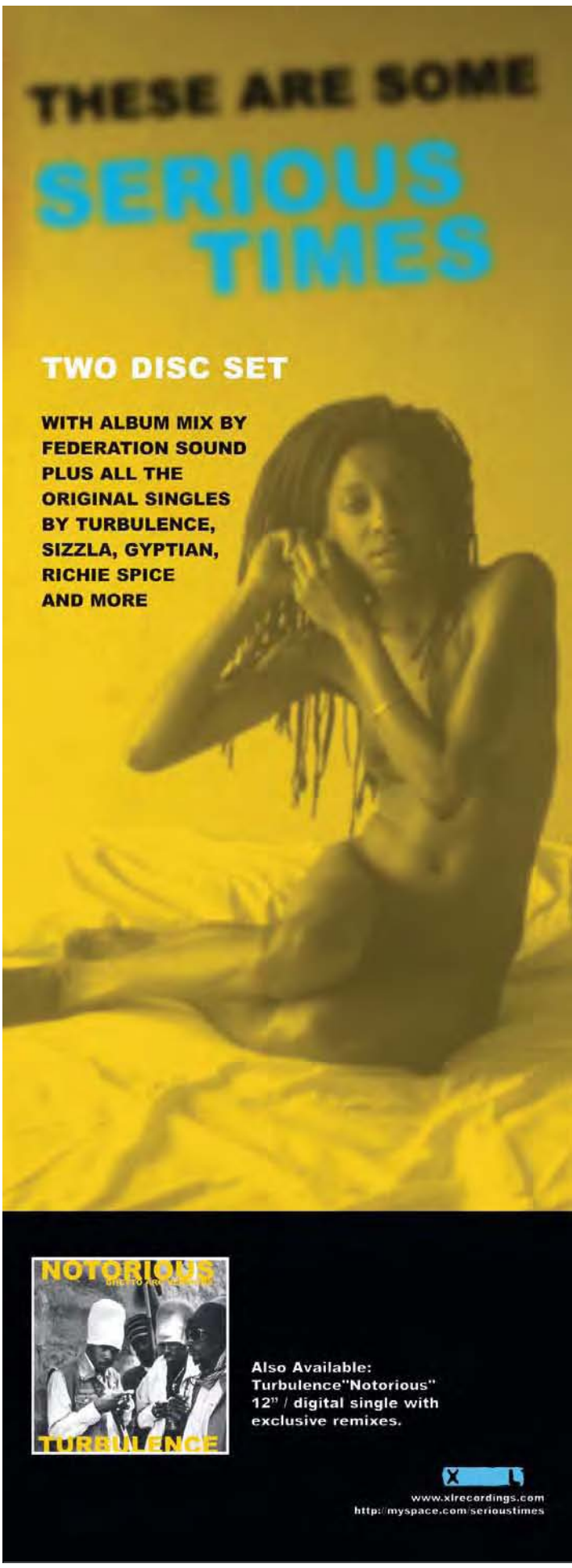
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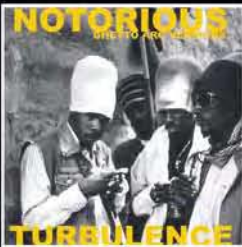
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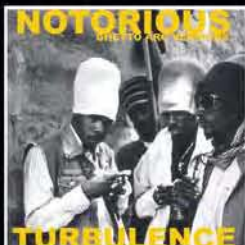
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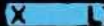


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WOMEN OF APPALACHIA



Photo by Jerry Hsu



A photograph of a green highway sign with white text and arrows. The sign is split into two sections: the top section says 'FORT GAY' with an upward-pointing arrow, and the bottom section says 'INEZ' with a right-pointing arrow. The sign is mounted on two metal posts. In the background, there are green trees, a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds, and a tall wooden utility pole with power lines. A metal guardrail runs across the foreground. The photo is credited to Jerry Hsu.

It's really hard to find good work in this county, especially someone that will pay good enough to raise two kids or that you don't have to drive an hour to get there. I'm not sure why it's so hard to get work here. A lot of the smaller places shut down. There's a Wal-Mart in Paintsville that closed a lot of the little businesses, and I think that a lot of the big restaurants shut down the little places too. McDonald's and Taco Bell.

Poverty is the main problem in this area. It's been like that since I was born. I've always known it. I know families that live out near where I do that still don't have running water in their houses. In 2006, I don't know why that is. I know one family that had 13 people living in a three-bedroom house at once.

There was a lot of them. There was a husband, his ex-wife and their kids, and his new wife and their kids. And then one of his daughters was married and had a baby. They all lived there.

I rent a trailer now. It's next door to my grandmom and aunt. They watch my kids while I'm working. It's just a two-bedroom. I do maintenance stuff on the trailer instead of paying rent. I replaced the floors and the carpet. My uncles come down and help me too, but for the most part I do it myself. I have to miss work a lot because of my kids. Destiny just had to have some teeth cut out, so I missed two days because of that. I bring home about \$460 every two weeks. I don't have to pay rent, but I need to buy materials. It comes out to about \$200 a month. The cable TV costs about \$40 a month for basic. My phone is only about \$17. I don't have long distance since I don't need it. My electric is usually about \$100 a month. I don't have to pay for water cause it's from a well. And then trash pickup is like \$14 a month.

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There was a lot of them. There was a husband, his ex-wife and their kids, and his new wife and their kids. And then one of his daughters was married and had a baby. They all lived there.

I rent a trailer now. It's next door to my grandmom and aunt. They watch my kids while I'm working. It's just a two-bedroom. I do maintenance stuff on the trailer instead of paying rent. I replaced the floors and the carpet. My uncles come down and help me too, but for the most part I do it myself. I have to miss work a lot because of my kids. Destiny just had to have some teeth cut out, so I missed two days because of that. I bring home about \$460 every two weeks. I don't have to pay rent, but I need to buy materials. It comes out to about \$200 a month. The cable TV costs about \$40 a month for basic. My phone is only about \$17. I don't have long distance since I don't need it. My electric is usually about \$100 a month. I don't have to pay for water cause it's from a well. And then trash pickup is like \$14 a month.

Poverty is the main problem in this area. It's been like that since I was born. I've always known it.

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When I was 16, the guy I was dating got shot and killed over drugs. Mostly it's prescription painkillers down here. They're easy to get. There are a lot of people around here who sell drugs because it pays better than a lot of the jobs you might get.

I haven't seen a lot of change since I was a kid. I think more parents might be fighting for their kids to not drop out of college, but a lot of kids are still not going, or dropping out, or taking forever to finish. I know one guy who has been in college for nine years and still doesn't have a degree.

I want my kids to have better than I did when I was growing up. I had an alcoholic dad and a mom who was on pills. Nobody ever tried to do anything for us until my grandmother ended up raising us. She's still raising my little brother and sister.

My little girl's name is Destiny because she saved my life. I was addicted to pills from the time I was 12 until I was 18. I bought them on the street from different people. My mom got me hooked on pills. She gave me some Xanax and said to take them with her. I guess she was bored and didn't want to do them alone. After I got pregnant with Destiny and got cleaned up, I went back to confront my mom about it. I was like, "What were you thinking?" We ended up having a fistfight.

SUNSHINE FANNIN

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SUNSHINE FANNIN



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FAMILY TRADITION

The Appalachian Way

Martin County, Kentucky is dry. That means unless you can make moonshine, you ain't getting drunk. If you want to crank it up, you need to head over the bridge into Fort Gay (yeah, yeah), West Virginia. That's where the Wildcat bar is. We were there on a Saturday night and it was a fucking rager. They played the Hank Jr. song "Family Tradition" so many times that we finally realized it is the national anthem down there. The DJ spun it again and again. A few different guys even did it in karaoke. That's all. We're not trying to make any cultural commentary here. It's just a fucking good song is all.

FAMILY TRADITION
by Hank Williams, Jr.

Country music singers have been a real close family, but lately some of my kinfolks have disowned a few others and me.

I guess its because I kind of changed my direction. Lord I guess I went and broke their family tradition.

They get on me and want to know Hank why do you drink? Why do you roll smoke? Why must you live out the songs that you wrote?

Over and over everybody makes my predictions. So if I get stoned, I'm just carrying on an old family tradition.

I am very proud of my daddy's name all though his kind of music and mine ain't exactly the same.

Stop and think it over. Put yourself in my position. If I get stoned and sing all night long it's a family tradition.

So don't ask me, Hank why do you drink? Hank, why do you roll smoke? Why must you live out the songs that you wrote?

If I'm down in a honky-tonk some ole slick's trying to give me friction. I said leave me alone, I'm singing all night long, it's a family tradition.

Lord, I have loved some ladies and I have loved Jim Beam and they both tried to kill me in 1973.

When that doctor asked me, Son how did you get in this condition? I said, hey sawbones, I'm just carrying on an ole family tradition.

So don't ask me, Hank, why do you drink? Hank, why do roll smoke? Why must you live out the songs that you wrote?

Stop and think it over, try and put yourself in my unique position. If I get stoned and sing all night long, it's a family tradition!



Photo by Jerry Hsu

PARTY AT THE WILDCAT



Photo by Jerry Hsu

Everyone—no matter what their condition—dances at the Wildcat.



Photo by Patrick O'Dell

Worshipping money in one of America's poorest areas. Real nice.

PARTY AT THE WILDCAT



Photo by Patrick O'Dell

They had the same airbrush guy do work all over the bar.

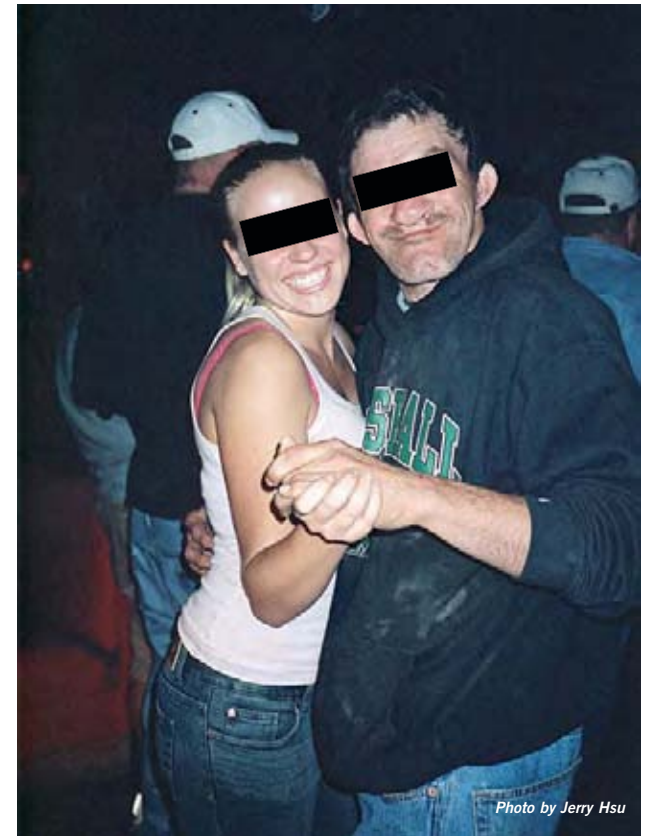


Photo by Jerry Hsu

That guy is the busboy at the bar, but he takes breaks to dance with local babes.



Photo by Jerry Hsu

This cost \$10.



Photo by Jerry Hsu

This cost \$20.

PARTY AT THE WILDCAT



Photo by Jerry Hsu

The busboy also took a break to sing some karaoke.



Photo by Jerry Hsu

Lo and behold, the back room of the Wildcat houses a makeshift tattoo parlor.

THE DEARS

GANG OF LOSERS

ON TOUR:

- OCT 04 The Troubadour :: Los Angeles, CA
- OCT 05 Pop Scene :: San Francisco, CA
- NOV 28 Neumo's :: Seattle, WA
- NOV 30 Doug Fir :: Portland, OR
- DEC 01 The Independent :: San Francisco, CA
- DEC 02 El Rey Theater :: Los Angeles, CA
- DEC 04 Urban Lounge :: Salt Lake City, UT
- DEC 05 Bluebird Theater :: Denver, CO
- DEC 07 Fine Line Café :: Minneapolis, MN
- DEC 08 Cabaret Metro :: Chicago, IL

"**Gang of Losers** is an intoxicating beautiful statement and the Dears' finest work to date." — John Kosik, *Associated Press*

"All in all, it's a soon-to-be classic by a band that will be around long after the Canadian invasion hype is gone." — Matt Fink, *The Sentimentalist* (Fall 2006)

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HOT SNAKES
Thunder Down Under

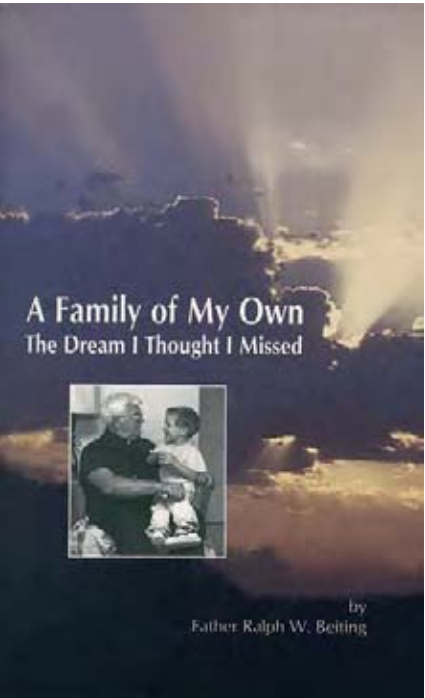
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**A Family of My Own:
The Dream I Thought I Missed**

Father Ralph W. Beiting

Father Ralph Beiting, who as you may well have noticed figures prominently in this issue of *Vice*, has written about 30,000 books. They are all independently published and are all personal and revelatory in nature. He is basically the Aaron Cometbus of Southern Catholic ministers.

For almost 50 years, Beiting has been working like a slave in the Appalachian area to help poor people live their lives with some dignity and comfort. If a few of them end up believing in Mary as the Mother of God and the Sacred Heart along the way, well hey, that's just Catholic fringe benefits. But really, to be a Catholic priest out in those Baptist hills 50 years ago was to more or less take his life in his hands. And Beiting did so, bravely, stomping right on out to the most remote hollers, knocking on cabin doors, and saying, "Hey, how can I help you?" He gained the trust of the classically suspicious poor of Appalachia and now he is best buddies with everyone in the area, from the poorest mountain man all the way up to mayors and judges. Father Ralph Beiting is as valuable as coal to the people of southeastern Kentucky.

JESUS H. CHRIST

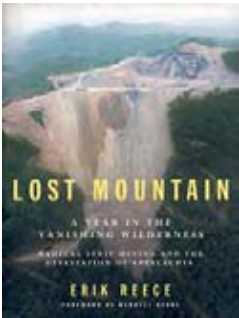


Appalachian Heritage

We stole a few copies of this from Father Beiting's house because it's a real gem. How did an obscure mag from a neglected corner of America manage to be as cutting-edge as any hip lit journal you can name right now? And 30 years ago, too! With its perfectly realized mix of prose, photo essays, poetry, interviews, and info, *Appalachian Heritage* could easily come out now as an art book and nobody would bat an eyelid. In fact,

they would all rip it off. In fact, I think I will go ahead and do just that. Right now.

JERRY MCPHEERSON



**Lost Mountain: A Year in
the Vanishing Wilderness**


Erik Reece

If you give a shit about any of the following: Earth, America, trees, mountains, peace, equality, and goodness, you need to read this book. Erik Reece traced the demise of one particular mountain from its full verdant bloom down to a naked gray hulk.

Reece teaches at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, which means

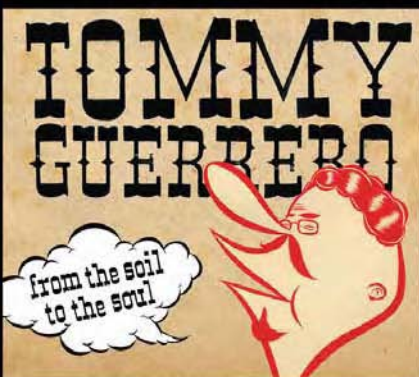
he's kind of a city slicker. Still, he really knocked it out of the park here. He doggedly interviews locals, experts, and activists. He sneaks onto mine sites to log his observations. He even gets to see a flying squirrel. Dude, they really fly and we're letting them die. Let's not let the flying squirrels die, OK?

WELSH RAREBIT

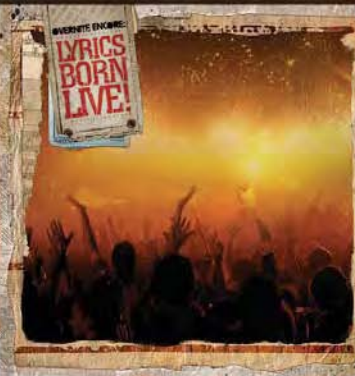


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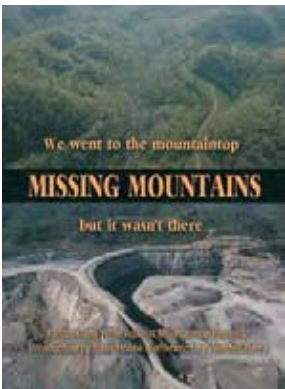


Sludge
Directed by Robert Salyer

Robert Salyer, a native of Virginian coal country, made this excellent documentary about the brutal coal slurry spill in Inez, Kentucky, in October 2000. (It's where we got the stills we used in the story on pages 82-86 of this issue, actually.) It's really insane to actually see what happened there. You'll be shocked, grossed out, and massively depressed by the levels of pollution and destruction you see in *Sludge*.

This movie took four years to make, and the depth and commitment really show. You owe it to your fellow Americans down there in Kentucky to watch *Sludge*, get righteously angry, and then start wondering about where and when the next Inez or, God forbid, Buffalo Creek spill is going to happen. Because it really is just a matter of time.

THE NOTORIOUS A.O.G.



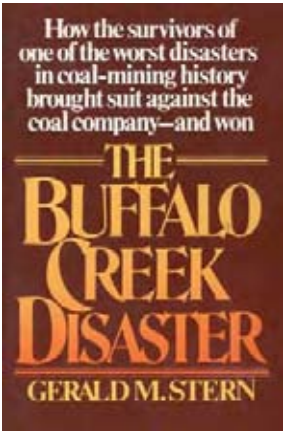
Missing Mountains
*Edited by Kentuckians for the Commonwealth
Wind Publications*

Kentuckians for the Commonwealth is a confederation of working-class families that addresses all kinds of local Kentucky issues. Obviously, they are especially vocal about mountaintop removal and stripmining.

This book is a compilation that KfC put together. It contains all kinds of writing by Kentuckians about mountaintop removal, but the best things are the heavy facts. Like, for example, there are 60 percent less jobs in Eastern Kentucky now than there were in 1979. That's because of strip mining—less miners are needed to do it.

Here's another fun fact: 61, 880 acres of valleys have been filled with the detritus of strip mining. Everything that lived in those valleys is now... Anyone? Anyone? The answer is: Destroyed.

THE NOTORIOUS A.O.G.



The Buffalo Creek Disaster
Gerald M. Stern

In 1972, a coal-slurry impoundment dam broke in Buffalo Creek, West Virginia. 132 million gallons of slurry flooded 16 different communities as a result, and 125 people were killed. 1,121 people were injured and 4,000 people were left without homes. Four. Fucking. Thousand.

Do you understand the awful torture that the coal industry has wrought on Appalachia yet? It's bewildering how badly one natural resource and the quest to pull it out of the ground has ass-raped this part of America. Read this book, read *Lost Mountain*, and then watch *Sludge* and *Harlan County, USA*. Coal covers all the bases of misery: Financial, emotional, and physical. It's enough to make you want to go, I don't know, solar.

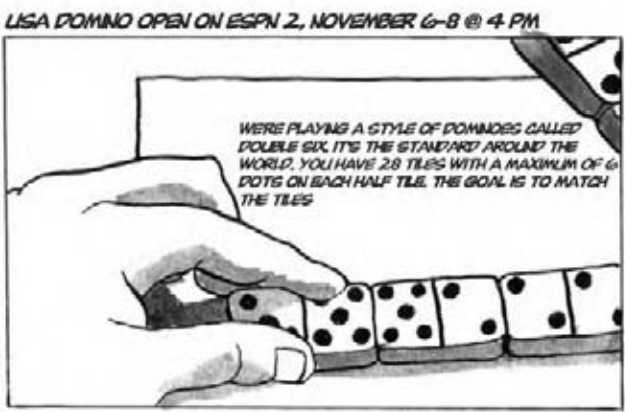
OLD YELLER



Harlan County, USA
*Directed by Barbara Koppel
The Criterion Collection*

We already reviewed this a couple issues back, but that was before we went to Kentucky. So where we used to be content to say something like, "This movie is awesome and the people have cool clothes," we now would like to amend that by saying, "Fuck big business, fuck capitalism, fuck coal, fuck bosses, fuck strike-breakers, and fuck anybody who doesn't make a point of seeing this essential American documentary." Which side are you on? The answer better be right.

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& OTHER STONES THROW ALL-STARS

REVIEWS FROM APPALACHIA

By Jim & His Dog Josie



Photo by
Jerry Hsu

Jim lives near Father Beiting, behind the Catholic rectory in Louisa, Kentucky. He helps out with all kinds of church business, takes care of the yard, and watches football on TV. He also has a finely tuned ear for music, so we made him our guest reviewer for this issue.

My parents volunteered for Father Beiting in the early 1960s. When my mom died in '92, Father Beiting came to do the funeral mass. He saw me and said, "Do you want to come back as a volunteer?" I said, "Well, let me think about it." Next thing I knew, I was here. And I've been here ever since.

My dog Josie is seven and a half years old. I've had her since she was a pup. Somebody came up and asked me if I wanted a dog. I was like, "Hmm, I don't know," but then they handed her to me. She sat in my hand and that was that. She's taken over since then.

Anyway, here's what I thought of some of this month's new records...



Photo by
Jerry Hsu



JOHN PHILLIPS
John the Wolfking of LA
Varese Sarabande

Great CD. I am into acoustic guitars. This guy plays well and writes very nice lyrics. There is a track that was popular quite a while back and I can't remember who did it, but it seems to be a favorite of his as well. It is in the middle of the CD and the ending of the CD as well.



RUB-N-TUG
Fabric 30
Fabric

First time I've really sat and listened to electro music. This recording has a good beat and some very interesting mixes of genres. It makes you feel like getting up and dancing (if I danced). Truly worth listening to more than once. Josie the dog found it a toe tapper. (You haven't seen anything till you see a beagle tapping her paw to the music.)



BOB DYLAN
Modern Times
Sony

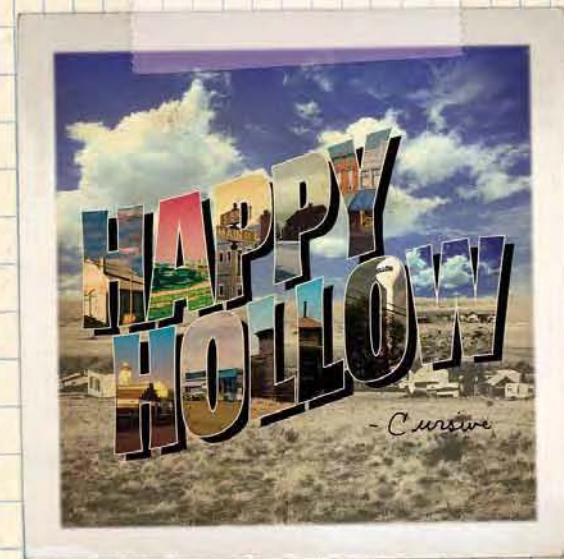
What can you say about Dylan? Every recording he comes up with a new self. This one is a decent mix of rocking beats and ballads, each connected in a way. The tracks are long, but definitely hold your interest with the story they tell.



What's New For Fall

1. CURSIVE 08.22.06
"HAPPY HOLLOW" CD/LP

SPIN and BLENDER
gave this 4 stars.
5 stars from A.P.
EW gave it an A-
Heard they are
coming to town.
**check Saddle Creek
site for tour dates**



THE SLITS
Revenge of the Killer Slits
Saf

Since I am not into punk rock this EP was definitely too long. It sounded like a bunch of out of tune guitars with tone-deaf women singing down a coal chute. Josie the dog found it so offensive she tried to take it outside and bury it.



MEAT LOAF
**Bat Out of Hell III:
The Monster is Loose**
Virgin

I didn't know this guy was still around. The CD is typical Meat Loaf. The music rocks and the lyrics are better than the first two *Bat Out of Hells* in that they seem to flow better from track to track. The album artwork is great too.



METHOD MAN
4:21... The Day After
Def Jam

Rap is one form of music that I am not at all familiar with. You don't really hear all that much of it on the radio, or at least the stations we get here. I really can't say much about it, expect it would be nice if the lyrics could be understood.



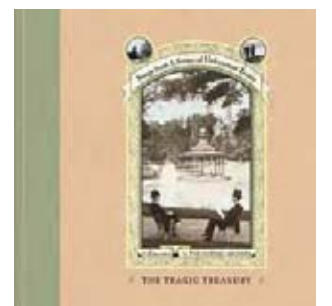
ALVARIUS B
Alvarius B
Abduction Records

This one is different. It consists of a bunch of short tracks that don't seem to flow together. When I first listened to it I thought this guy was taking bad drugs or drunk, but after a second time it came together. It still doesn't flow very well, but is certainly worth listening to.



BECK
The Information
Interscope

This is a person I had heard of, but not ever really listened to much of his music. This CD got my attention. It is an interesting mixture of rap, hip-hop, and folk rock. It was truly listenable and it came with a DVD of videos for each track. Plus it has stickers to create your own album cover evidently. Very creative.



THE GOTHIC ARCHIES
The Tragic Treasury
Nonesuch

This CD is a companion to the Lemony Snicket books evidently. The music is very gothic and dreary. The lyrics are sardonic. It isn't something for kids to listen to before bed unless they want nightmares.

JIM HARAGAN & JOSIE THE DOG



2. BRIGHT EYES 10.24.06 CD/2xLP
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Photo by Jerry Hsu

We tried to steal this t-shirt off him, but the owners were staring us down and we're pretty sure they had guns.

The album cover for Lady Sovereign's "Love Me or Hate Me" features a black and white photograph of a graffiti-covered wall. The words "PUBLIC WARNING!" are written in large, bold, black letters across the center of the wall. To the left of the text is a small graffiti of a person's head. To the right is a graffiti of a person's face. A small dog is visible on the ground to the right. The top of the cover has the artist's name "Lady Sovereign" in a large, yellow, stylized font. Below the name, it says "FEATURING 'LOVE ME OR HATE ME'". At the bottom, there is a list of retailers: "newburycomics.com", "www.ladysovereign.com", "www.myspace.com/ladysovereign", and "www.defjam.com". The Def Jam logo is in the bottom right corner. The text "IN STORES OCTOBER 31ST" is prominently displayed in white on a black background at the bottom.

PRECIOUS FATHERS



self-titled debut
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members of
DESTROYER + LOSCIL + the BATTLES
instrumental post-rock from
Vancouver's finest!



CASTLE PROJECT



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break-up album of 2006!
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think absolute fucking heartbreak 'ZUC"



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A pole-sitting cat above a trailer in the hills.



DRUM MACHINE
SEQUENTIAL CIRCUITS
DRUMTRAKS

ECHO

DISTORTION

CYMBAL

CYMBAL

HI-HAT

SNARE DRUM

FLOOR TOM TOM

RING MODULATOR

4-TRACK SAMPLER

STEREO MIXER

TO TAPE RECORDER

SEAT

BASS
FENDER
PRECISION

FOOT SWITCH

ECHO

SPLIT

TO TAPE RECORDER

100 WATT AMPLIFIER

TO TAPE RECORDER

SYNTHESIZER
KORG
MS-10

ECHO

SPLIT

ENVELOPE

PHASER

RING MODULATOR

TREMOLO

ECHO

REVERB

TO TAPE RECORDER

MIXER

REVERB

TO TAPE RECORDER

ECHO

GUITAR
BROOKBANKER
620/12

VOCODER
KORG
VC-10

SYNTHESIZER
ROLAND
JUNO-60

SWITCH

SYNTHESIZER
ROLAND
SH-1000

ECHO

REVERB

TO TAPE RECORDER

TO TAPE RECORDER

50 WATT AMPLIFIER

ECHO

RING MODULATOR

ENVELOPE

REVERB

TREMOLO

FUZZ/WH

"A contemporary gloss on Kraftwerk, or a keyboard-heavy take on the dance-punk of DFA Records" **NEW YORK TIMES**

"All their songs sound like the trippy bit at the end of the Stone Roses' 'I Am The Resurrection' played by Kevin Shields-era Primal Scream." **NME**

"A first-order phenomenon, with its own heat and light" **PITCHFORK**

120Days

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WOWEE ZOWEE
SORDID SENTINELS EDITION
DOBLE DISCO COMPACTO

SUERTE DE CAPOTE

LOAD SIXTEEN TONS
AND WHAT DO YOU GET?

Continued from pg. 59

ple on that doctor list that has never said a man has had black lung. It's like a 99.99.99 percent chance that they're gonna say there's nothing wrong with you because you worked in the coal mines. These doctors are in the companies' pockets. They know who is paying the bills. One of these exams runs about \$2,000. They know what the company sends them, and if they start saying that people have black lung the companies aren't going to keep on sending them these people for exams.

I filed for federal black-lung benefits in '96 or '97. I went to Dr. Rasmussen, the doctor who first identified black lung. He gave me total disability on my lungs. In '68, he decided there was something killing coal miners and they couldn't breathe and everything. He's the first one that ever actually said that there was a cause for people having breathing problems. I got awarded federal black-lung status from the Department of Labor as a result of that visit. The company had 30 days

to appeal and in about ten days I got a letter. They wanted me to go to a doctor out in Harlan. He was one of these doctors that doesn't believe that anybody has black lung. He said there wasn't anything wrong with me. He said that I couldn't breathe because I had smoked cigarettes and I was obese. According to him, I definitely don't have black lung. When they appealed this case, that put me before a judge. He overturned the Department of Labor's decision. He said that Dr. Rasmussen was not a credible source. This judge absolutely don't believe anybody's got black lung. I know a guy who had maybe 35 or 40 years in the coal mines. He can't be away from his house for more than four hours at a time because he has to do treatments on a breathing apparatus. This judge says he doesn't have black lung either. He's about 73 years old now and he's been trying to get benefits for years. This judge also said he ruled against me due to my "appearance and demeanor." I'm not sure what he means by that. Then he turned around and said the same thing, "appearance and demeanor," about this 73-year-old man I know.

The company denied that I ever even

worked for them. Just like I didn't exist. Their lawyer claimed that I never did. We had a little discussion, and they said they would give me 12 years. Like they were bargaining me down from all the years I'd really worked. My lawyer wanted to agree to that because you only need to have ten years to qualify for benefits if you have the disease. She said, "We'll agree," and I said, "No. I am not agreeing to that." We checked the math, and I had worked exactly 21 and three quarters of a year. I would have lost ten years out of my history on there. The judge had to go and get my Social Security records, and we were finally able to prove how much time I'd put in down there in the mines.

I quit the railroad and went to work for the coal mines. Since then, I've thought time and time again that I wish I'd never went in the coal mines. I don't ever want my son going in the mines. There was an old man who told me when I was about 26 or 27 years old, "You need to get out the coal mines. When you stay there 15 or 20 years, you're never going to be able to feel good again." He was 100 percent right.

CHARLES TIPTON

WALK IN MY SHOES

Continued from pg. 97

people here make more money on welfare than working.

A lot of people will complain with their back. A doctor cannot prove or disprove that their back's not bothering them. There's no X-rays that can prove that a person's back's not bothering them. I've got back problems myself, but the doctors can prove that. I've got tore muscles, pinched nerves, and a bulged disk. I'm having to take shots now for it, since I'm working so much too. I take cor-

tisone. I have to go to the hospital once every two or three months. They put 17 shots in me last Friday. Doctor said if I was to quit liftin' and tuggin' I'd be all right. But when you got things to pay for, you have to work.

I keep all my bills paid. Never had anything cut off. I set me a budget, and if I've got extra money left over then I'll go to a grocery store, buy food. If I don't have it left over, I eat at Moonie's and you know, she'll usually send some stuff home with me and I use that for supper. There ain't no use for me to cook. I live alone. I've managed to save \$2,000 for Christmas. I don't waste money.

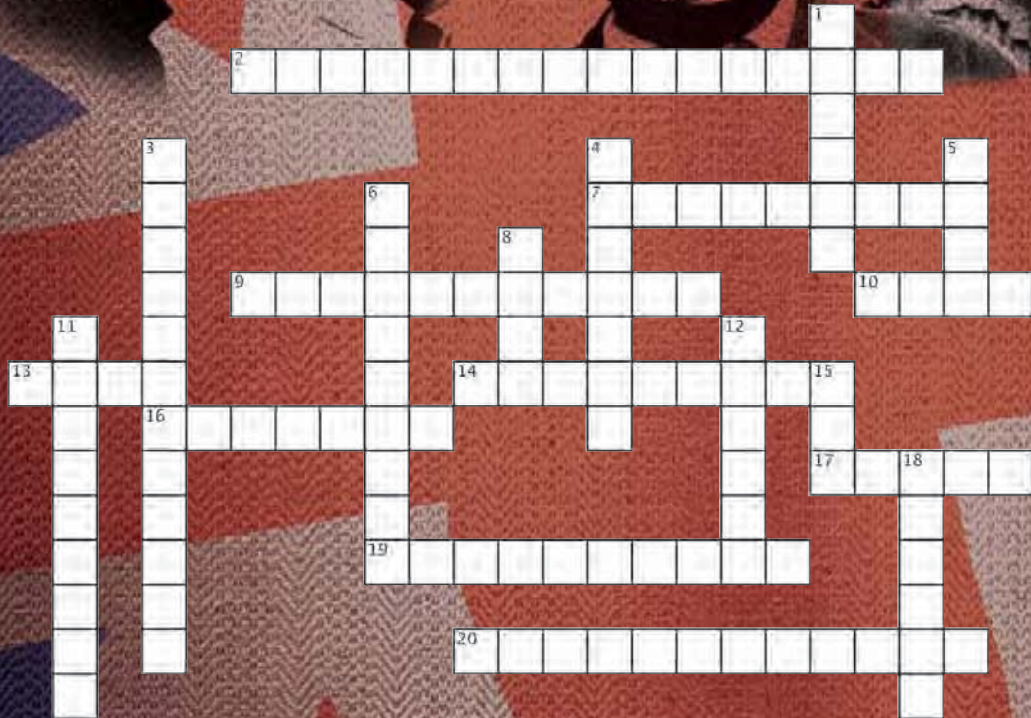
Carter always said I could pinch a dollar till George Washington would squeal. But I mean, I have to.

For a while after I divorced him, Carter'd come around, try to get me to take him back and this and that. He's the only one's ever bothered me. Still, I do have a gun, a .380 special. I've never had to use it. When I'm at home, I load it and leave it on my coffee table. If I'm in the living room or if I get up and go to bed, I take it in the bedroom with me and keep it on my nightstand. I'm too old to be hurt. I'm 54. I've seen enough.

GLADYS MILLS



DELUXE
Edition



ACROSS

2. "It's only _____"
7. Their "Hanging by a Moment" was #1 in 2003
9. Bought a cell phone
10. Mixed up Lear
13. As in loon
14. Standard material?
16. Haggle
17. Beastly Alias
19. In place of
20. The Who's 1st Single

DOWN

1. Skin Art
3. WW I Ace
4. Mose penned "Young Man Blues"
5. Maravich or Sampras
6. Renewable Energy Source
8. Entwistle Instrument
11. "I don't care about _____"
12. Early logo for the The Who
15. Early Who manager Lambert
18. Slimy Treat



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LBJ DAY

A Hometown Girl Jots Down Her Notes

This memoir of Lyndon B. Johnson's visit to Kentucky was handwritten by Inez, Kentucky native Shelba Pack Brown on April 24, 1964. We maintained the spelling and grammar just as it was because we like the way it sounds. That's all. It's not to be funny.

April 24, 1964, was just like any other day in my life. I am a part-time clerk in the Post Office at Beauty. I was at work when a friend of mine that works in the Judges Office at Inez came in to the office and said that the president would be here tomorrow. The president I could hardly believe it. Why was he coming here? She said he would be here at about 3:30 and would be in the county for close an hour. I guess the real impact didn't hit me that evening but I was up pretty early the next morning. Dressing that morning seem to take hours. After I'd finished I went to the Post Office. Mother hadn't been busy, everyone was heading for town.

The first thing I wanted to do was get my hair set. On my way to town I stopped at Norma's drive Inn. Norm is a close friend and I use to work for her part-time as a car hop. When I told her where I was going she ask me not to. She said they had been busy all morning, they being Phyllis Mills and Pat Sammons, so it was off to the Bank for change and back to the Drive Inn.

Beside of the Drive Inn is a large plane. This field is where the president was going to land. The Sheriff came up and told us that the president would be there at 3:20. From about 11:00 until 4:00 we were too busy to worry, then suddenly. Where was the President? Had he changed his mind? Then a reassuring voice, no he would just be an hour late.

At about four ten I went out into the crowds. By this time they had brought in bus loads of school children and all of the towns people had come up to see planes land. I walked out on the bank to watch the small planes circle the field. Four planes landed and out of them

poured more secret service men and many more news men. When the fifth plane landed almost before I could get a good view of Mr. Johnson & Land Bird they were pushing through the crowds making a path and shaking hands. I was shoved into this crowd and I was able to shake hands with both of them. I am twenty-one years old and this was one of the greatest moments of my life. To be that close too two such great people will be a feeling I'll always remember.

After the president was finally seated and headed toward town, we reopened the Drive Inn and worked and talked for about forty-five minutes.

While the President was gone he visited two homes. These were two of the poorer families of the country. A boy paralyzed from a car wreck was watching from a cot set up in Norms yard. Her house is located on a hill and from this slant he had a good view of what was going on. Sheriff Mike Handy mentioned on the two way radio set hooked up to the President that J.C. Blankenship was in that yard and would the President have time to shake hand and speak to him. One of the secret service men vetoed the idea saying that they were already quite late. Mr. Johnson said as long as they were already late a few more minutes wouldn't matter. Our President and his wife took time to get out of the car and walk up to J.C. speak a few words and make his day a little brighter. When the president boarded his plane and left there was a hush over the crowd.

The people of Eastern Kentucky will long remember the President who had time for us.
SHELBA PACK BROWN



Silly Pink Bunnies.com



The Thigh-Highs



Caitlin Cullimore, a 23-year-old of Welsh, Ojibwa Indian and Swiss descent, was born in Toronto. She grew up competing internationally as a gymnast, and also across Canada as a contortionist. At the age of 13 she began her training with the National Ballet School there, and at 17 won a scholarship to Alvin Ailey's dance school in New York. Sponsored by Ailey, she performed with different contemporary dance companies and off-Broadway productions around the city for the next four years. Caitlin then moved back to Canada to choreograph her own works; she is currently in Montreal preparing her debut and working at American Apparel.

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